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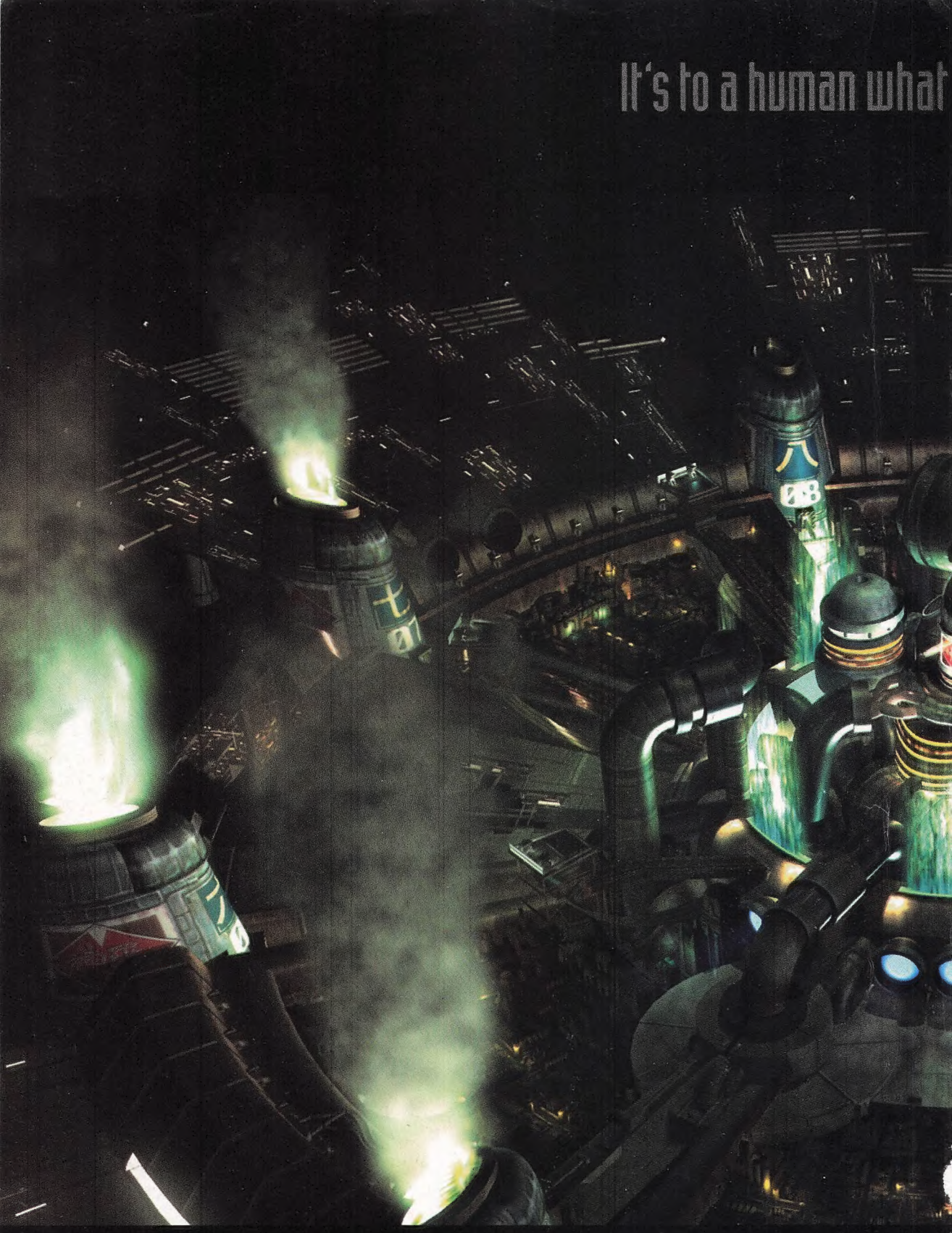

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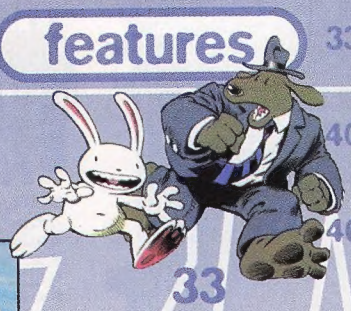

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JLA™ & © 1997 DC Comics

ON THE COVER
The **Classic JLA** was painted by Alex Ross. But can these guys measure up to today's JLA? Flip to page 40 to find out!

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Lady Death™ & © 1997 Chaos! Comics

Lady Death was illustrated by Steven Hughes and colored by Twilight Graphics. To see who we'd pick for a "Lady Death" movie, check out page 54. (To learn more about Mr. Hughes, go to page 208.)

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EXCLUSIVE

Snikt! Here's your only chance to get the exclusive Wolverine #1/2 comic featuring a slice-and-dice story of Wolvie and his buddies Cable and Cannonball. Pounce to page 80 for details.

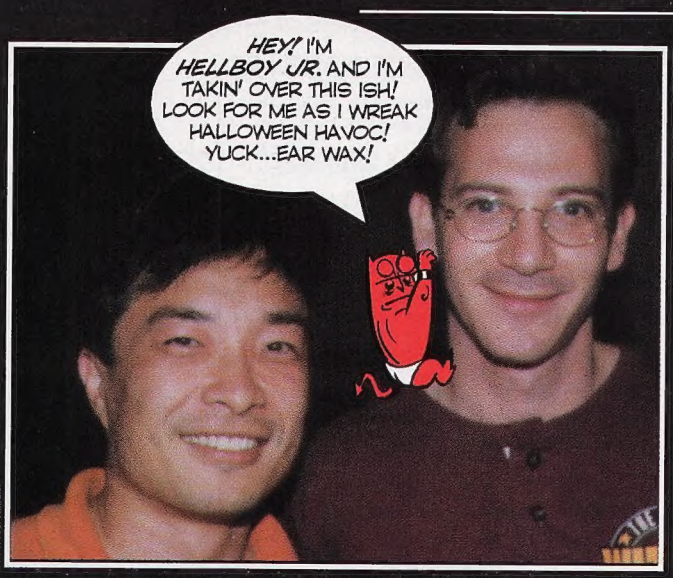

Photo: Paul Sidiraldi

ANNIVERSARY TREAT

Whenever we have an "Anniversary" issue like *Wizard* #75, it always gets me thinking about what we've done, and even more, what we want to do. We've always wanted to do Marvel #1/2 books, and this month we have a huge one in *Wolverine* #1/2. In issue #77, we'll have *Nightwing* #1/2 from DC. Wizard Authentic has been created to provide high-quality autographed comics and toys. So now you can buy autographs that we certify as authentic.

Believe it or not, you can buy *Wizard* in Portuguese, but you'll have to go to Brazil to get it. (Yeah, Rio!) Also, we put on our first convention in Chicago, and plan to do more. This way, you can come out and meet us along with many of today's hottest talents in comics, toys, card gaming, sci-fi and so on. We're always looking to do more about the things we enjoy, and we're glad you're along for the ride.

This month we've got two great covers—a Halloween-themed Lady Death by Steven Hughes and DC's Silver Age superheroes as painted by Alex Ross. Inside you'll find our annual Halloween Costume Contest and an interview with hot writer Joe Kelly, who's set to take over *X-Men* real soon. In a fun feature, we pit today's JLA against the classic Silver Age JLA team in a big battle. This month's Q&A is with some guy named Jim Lee. Maybe you've heard of him. And then there's plenty of tricks and treats for you throughout the rest of the magazine.

As for goodies this month, look for the great *Heroes Return ACE Edition* available through your local retailer, and enjoy the *Divine Right* Chromium Card by Jim Lee—his new project is sure to do great. Also, you'll get an *Ascension* poster which is the newest hot project from Top Cow.

See ya,

Gareb S. Shamus

P.S. I just came back from the "South Park" Premiere Party. "Park" is a new animated show on Comedy Central. Check it out! It's hysterical.

ABC AUDITED

THE WIZARD GUILTY PARTIES

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Classic JLA Cover Art Alex Ross
Lady Death Cover Art Steven Hughes, colored by Twilight Graphics

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Stuff you don't ever read...

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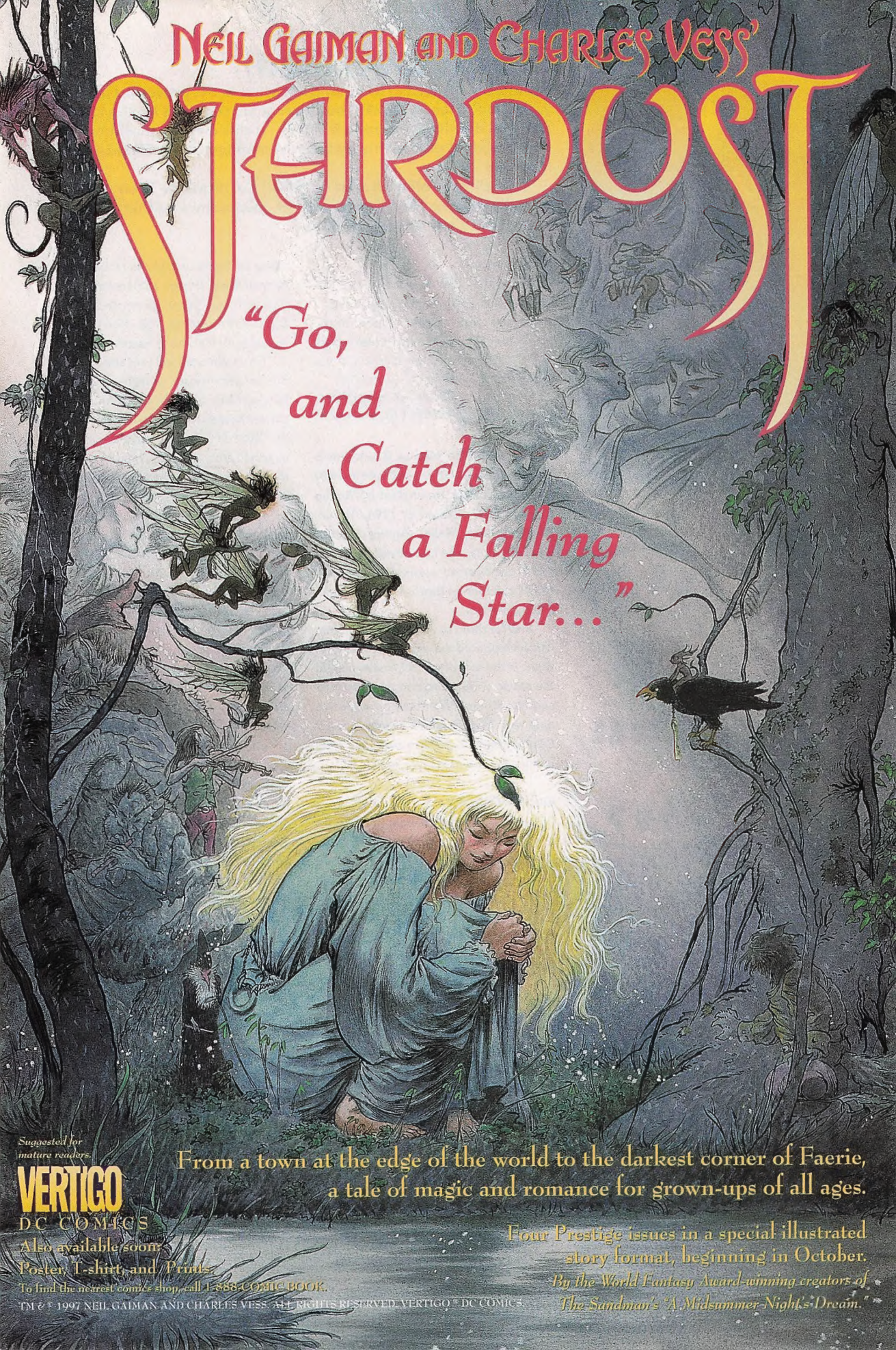
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MAGIC WORDS

Movie Overload!

Big topic in the letters this month? Movies. In the proverbial nutshell, you loved "Men in Black," but were a bit confused by the credits. And you despised "Batman & Robin" with a driving, throbbing passion matched only by my own never-ending lust for Cheez-Its and free beer.

So we'll lead off with a bit of "MiB" clarification. Then we'll run the only *positive* "B&R" letter we got, just ta show ya there's always two sides to any argument. Enjoy.

Dear Jim,

I just saw the "Men in Black" movie and loved it. But during the opening credits, I could have sworn it said, "Based on the Marvel comic." I always thought *Men in Black* was a Malibu comic. Are Malibu Comics and Marvel Comics somehow related?

Charles Sapphire
RLGUMBY@aol.com

The original* The Men in Black *was a three-issue mini-series published in 1990 by Aircel Comics, an imprint of Malibu Comics. In November of 1994, Marvel bought Malibu. Malibu Comics does not exist anymore, the line having folded in 1996. So Marvel owns Malibu, and they'll call* Men in Black *a Marvel comic if they wanna.

And for those of you scoring at home, Marvel reprinted the original* The Men in Black *in the summer of '97, and published the movie adaptation and two new* MiB *comics. Marvel also inked an exclusive deal with* Men in Black *creator Lowell Cunningham to publish any new* MiB *comics for the next five years.

Dear Wizard,

I'm sick and tired of hearing people complain about the lack of "realism" in the Batman films. As one recent movie reviewer said, "It's a comic book. It's not supposed to be like real life." The bottom line is that comic books and movies are both forms of *entertainment*. If you want realism, discontinue your comic subscriptions and quit going to the movies. Start watching documentaries.

I remember lying back with double pneumonia at age 7 and my mother bringing in a stack of new comics. I eagerly flipped through them and was content. That's what comics are all about: Not a whining 30-year-old complaining about lack of plot in movies, not old men at flea markets peddling their collections, not even disgusting fanboys pulling wagons of comics. Comic books are about kids, and the enjoyment that those kids get out of sitting for hours on end and reading about Batman flying through a stained-glass window and pouncing on his criminal prey or Spider-Man perched high above his city, watching for a crime to happen.

I'm 14 years old and I still enjoy comics. But I'm also mature enough—unlike you 30-year-olds out there—to know that comics belong to kids, and so do movies like "Batman & Robin." It's okay for adults to go and enjoy them, but keep in mind that they're just there for *enjoyment*. And if you don't think everything adds up to a strong, solid plot, just remember: Your kids probably think it's the best stuff in the world.

Jason DeHart
Lashmeet, WV

Jason brings a different view than (quite literally) every other letter we received on the subject, and also brings a good point: Comic books and movies are simply escapist entertainment. It's not the end of the world if a Batman movie is released and you don't like it. So relax.

And another thing: You know how they always say the book was better than the movie? I think that holds true for any source material. If you translate a novel into a movie, you're going to lose something in the translation and diminish the concept to some extent. Similarly, if a story is originally written as a screenplay and someone wants to make it into a novel, you're going to lose something again and be left with a crummy novel. In the case of Batman, it's the comic book, for a change—the original source material—that's better than the movie. So score one for comics.

An Open Letter to Michael Golden:

I saw the "Silence is Golden" feature on you in *Wizard* #72 and I want you to know it's great that you're back doing comics again. I've been a fan for almost 20 years. But when I read that you actually destroy your originals when you get them back, I thought of a better solution:

There are several conventions around

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the country that auction off items for charity, like the Mid-Ohio Con every November that raises money for March of Dimes. Please consider donating some pages to one of these cons for auction and help raise money for a worthy cause. The quality of your art and the fact that you've got quite a fan following—not to mention the scarcity of Golden originals on the market—should guarantee a tidy sum for whatever cause you donate the art to. Please keep my suggestion in mind.

Philip Fried
PFried100@aol.com

For those of you just tuning in, Michael Golden is a highly respected and very influential artist who keeps an incredibly low profile, but may be coming out of his shell just a bit. He hadn't done an interview in 20 years until he did one in Wizard #72. He hadn't done a comic con appearance in 18 years until he just did one at the Heroes Convention in Charlotte, N.C., in June, 1997. He also took the advice of Philip at Heroes Con, as he donated one of his originals to a charity art auction there.

Dear All-Knowing Jim,
What's up with those skinnier-than-a-green-bean superchicks like Gen13's Fairchild and Dawn? Their tops must outweigh the rest of their bodies by about 50 pounds!

Erin Hamilton
Arlington, TX

I'm not sure what the hell you've been looking at, but it's obviously not Dawn. Dawn is drawn in a very realistic style and has a very believable—albeit very voluptuous—shape. In fact, Dawn is the representation of Gaia or Isis—a mother figure—and has them wide, child-bearing hips. Not exactly "skinnier-than-a-green-bean."

On the other hand, Fairchild is drawn in a much more cartoony, exaggerated style. She is intentionally drawn out of proportion, with legs up to her neck and a waistline smaller than a peanut butter jar. Your green bean analogy may apply to Fairchild, but not to Dawn.

Jim takes one of his favorite letters of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Dear Jim,
Since you are the undisputed master of the kidney punch, I was hoping you could give me some advice as to what would be a good follow-up move. Should you deliver another kidney punch? A well-placed atomic elbow? Or should you just run like a schoolgirl in hopes that you are faster than your victim?

I was also wondering if you guys plan to exact any revenge against the bunny who terrorizes staff members every month with his hammer. Do you plan on taking any legal action against the bunny? Are you going to take care of him with a kidney punch? Or are you just going to have the bunny neutered?

Tom Jodelka
Oak Lawn, IL
Homer856@aol.com

After delivering a kidney punch from behind, the target usually arches back in pain. So a forearm smash to the chest is a good follow-up. Trust me: At this point, running is not necessary.

And I think you're a bit confused. The Bunny does not terrorize us. The Bunny, in fact, is our friend. He only mallets those who deserve it, and we're the ones who tell him who's deserving. He's our designated hit-rabbit and, as you can see above, he's also rather proficient with a baseball bat. So don't mess.

Jim,
I would like to let you know that despite what most people think of your making fun of comic book characters, I love it! I do have one question, though: Do you ever get the cold shoulder from the writers or artists of the comics that you dis?

Shane Lenzner
Antigo, WI

Hmmm. Good question. As shown above, I probably cap on the Gen13 characters more than anything else. So I'll ask the artists of Gen13.

Penciler J. Scott Campbell says, "Nah. I won't give you the cold shoulder. Sarcasm seems to be the attitude that the whole column is done in. I take into account that it's part of the package in 'Magic Words.' And you seem to make fun of different comics all across the board, so it's not like it's all-out war against Gen13 in particular. I guess you're all right."

Inker Alex Garner agrees, saying, "If you attack the book, fine. Any publicity is good publicity."

Chee, what a couple of nice, reasonable fellas. I'll have to see what I can do about that.

Dear Mr. McLauchlin,
What's the expiration date on "Milk" from Milk and Cheese?

Ed Prichard
JimLesLand@aol.com

April 20. Just what year, we're not sure. But as was shown in M&C's "Flee Market" strip (available in the Fun With Milk and Cheese paperback from Slave Labor Graphics), Milk once hit his expiration date and Cheese attempted to sell him at a flea market. After not receiving an offer they thought was good enough, the Lactose Intolerants decided to fold, spindle and mutilate a few people, as is their norm.

Pssst! Pass it on—April 20 is also the birthday of Milk and Cheese creator Evan Dorkin.

Dear Jim,

Is there a demand *anywhere* in this field for female artists? When I see your "Top 10 Artists" list, I sure don't see any girls! Can you tell me of any awesome lady artists anywhere?

Dara McClendon
Riverside, CA

There's a demand everywhere for good artists in this field, regardless of gender. A few well-known female artists include Amanda Conner, who does various Vampirella and Event Comics projects, and Jill Thompson, whose Scary Godmother from Sirius Entertainment is hitting right about now.

And let us not forget that there are a bevy of talented female writers out there, too. F'r example, Jo Duffy of Catwoman fame, Ann Nocenti (who did a long run on Daredevil), Witchblade co-writer Christina Z. (above) and Louise Simonson of Superman: The Man of Steel are all women. Trust us—we checked!

Dear Wizard,

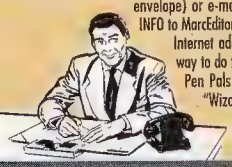
Tonight, while watching the "Space Ghost: Coast to Coast" TV show, I saw the end credits that said the original design for Space Ghost was done by Alex Toth. I know his name is familiar. What else has Mr. Toth done?

Bill Wiltfong
Stillwater, OK

Alex Toth did his longest runs in comics on DC's All-American Western #103-#126 in the years 1948 through 1952, and a few assorted issues of Green Lantern in '48 that fell between issues #28 and #38. But he's much more significant for the influence he had on an entire generation of comic artists who came up in the 1960s and '70s. Howard Chaykin, creator of American Flagg! and co-creator of Cyberella, is one of those artists. Howie say: "Alex Toth's predominant influences came from industrial design and the magazine illustrators of his time. As such, Toth represented a level of visual sophistication and visual economy in comics that was

Hey! It's Pen Pals

Make a friend! Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address on page 14 (put your age on the envelope) or e-mail your REGULAR ADDRESS INFO to MarcEditor@aol.com. If you want your Internet address listed instead, the only way to do this is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; look under "Wizard Message Boards").



PEN PALS

Raymond Paul Gonzalez
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3413 Homan
Waco, TX 76710
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Bala Ganesh
Age: 17 Sex: Male
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Singapore 168789
Likes: *The X-Files, The Simpsons, The Mask*

Ryan Sabin
Age: 17 Sex: Male
37363 Oakview St.
Burney, CA 96013
Likes: X-titles, *Gen13, The Tenth*

Shannon LaMar
Age: 13 Sex: Female
4526 West Pleasant Acres Drive
Decatur, AL 35603
Likes: Spider-titles, *Superman*, anything good

Shannon Skelcher
Age: 12 Sex: Female
2214 Duff Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82001
Likes: *X-Men, Uncanny X-Men, Generation X*

Scott Sawyer
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Yorktown, IN 47396
Likes: *JLA, Nightwing, Avengers*

Lissette Williams
Age: 19 Sex: Female
P.O. Box 960515
Miami, FL 33296-0515
Likes: *WildC.A.T.s, Gen13, WetWorks*

often beyond the grasp of his audience then, and certainly way above the heads of today's readers. He helped shape the way comics were done in the 1950s, their most important period of development."

Dear Greg,
The question I have is about a guy named Ed McGuinness, artist of *Wolverine '96*. His art in that book was superb! I want to know if I can find more comics he's worked on.

Manuel Carmona
Utuado, Puerto Rico

Who the hell is Greg? First a letter to Michael Golden and now a letter to some guy named "Greg"? Who's running this show, anyway?

Finding more McGuinness work is easy, but only if you look in Vampirella Strikes #1-#2 from Harris Comics or issues #1-#9 of Deadpool from Marvel Comics. And look for future McGuinness work in the second Fighting American mini-series from Awesome Entertainment in the first quarter of 1998.

Dear Wizard,
A few days ago, I started thinking about what would happen if a group of scientists predicted the end of the world exactly three months before it happened. The first thing I thought was: What would happen to the comic book industry? Would every comic publisher simply put out a last issue of every title to wrap things up before the Earth was gone? Or would they just continue as usual?

Kushmeer Farakhan
Kansas City, MO

Lemme get this straight: If you knew the world was going to end in three months, your primary concern would be...comic books? You, my friend, are one severely weird-ass dude with absolutely no sense of priorities.

But since we like weird-ass dudes in this column, we'll farm your question out to our two favorite weird-ass publishers, starting with Chaos! Comics' Brian Pulido (top left): "In the case of Chaos!, it would be business as usual, because our Chaos! Cosmos is slated for Armageddon the last week of December, 1999. It's over. Put a fork in us, 'cause we're done, man! Seriously! We're gonna blow up our entire universe—permanently!"

Meanwhile, the equally weird-in-his-own-way Jeph Loeb (bottom left) of Awesome Entertainment says in a more reasoned response that "If the world was gonna end in three months, I'd be home with my family. The job of publishing comics would be someone else's problem."

Now there's a man with his priorities intact.

Hello, Jim,
I was wondering what you could tell me about the new artists Leinil Yu and "Ladronn." I really like the few issues I've seen from both guys. Are they going to be taking on regular monthly books?

Joe McSpadden
Nokesville, VA
trentren@aol.com

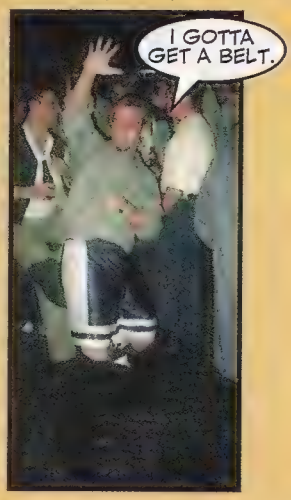
They already have. Leinil Francis Yu is the regular penciler on Wolverine and has been since #113. José Ladronn just started a monthly assignment on Cable with issue #48.

Dear Magic Words,
Do you know if Randy Queen is going to do a *Darkchylde* ongoing series?

Adam Contreras
Amit711@aol.com

Yep. Queen says, "I'm beginning a regular bimonthly Darkchylde with a new #1 issue in January, 1998. The first story arc will be a murder mystery, and as Ariel Chylde gathers clues to the mystery, she'll also gather clues to her origin."

And for those of you who read "Top 10 Comics" in Wizard #73 and were looking forward to pictures of Randy dancing the schmeggenhimey dance naked, take a look here. No, he's not quite naked, but pictures of guys with their pants around their knees are always funny. Plus, if we ran the naked shots, we couldn't get this mag across any state line without a warning label.



Dear Wizard,
I have a few questions for you guys:

1) Is it just me or does the plot of *Gen13* seem to revolve around Fairchild's butt?

2) How can I get a bag of Iszs from McFarlane Toys?

3) Boxers or briefs?

Trey Benfield
Gastonia, NC
Ape Boy@aol.com

I have a few answers for you:

1) Yep. Sure does. Damn, but I'll get them Campbell and Garner boys pissed at me yet!

2) You can't! Ha! The bag of Iszs is a McFarlane Toys Collector's Club exclusive offer that has been discontinued. The club offers three to four exclusive thingees a year, and the current one is called "Necro-plasm Spawn." Check out any recent issue of Spawn for details on the Club.

3) I usually wear those super-long schmeggenhimey boxers like Randy Queen up there.

Hey Jim,
I've got some questions I was hoping you could answer. Here you go:

1) Where are the people who made POGs today?

PENPALS

Chris Jones
Age: 13 Sex: Male
1536 Woodcrest Circle
Hinesville, GA 31313
Likes: *Fantastic Four, Weapon Zero*, anything by Jim Lee

Nick Jones
Age: 12 Sex: Male
7306 E. 27th St.
Tulsa, OK 74129
Likes: *Spawn, Witchblade, Gen13*

Akil Lyle
Age: 21 Sex: Male
1615 Boscobel St.
Nashville, TN 37206
Likes: *Strangers in Paradise, Gen13*, most DC titles

Tiffany Emmert, 10/f
DEmmertif@aol.com
X-titles, *Spawn, Deadpool*

Kyle Lewis, 16/m
Joniah@aol.com
X-titles, *Deadpool*, Wolvie

Luke Young, 17/m
zorak_69@hotmail.com
X-Files, Vampirella, Witchblade

Eric Smith, 14 /m
someperson1@juno.com
Spider-Man, X-Men, The Crow

Andy Chu, 18/m
ARC96002@UConnVM.UConn.Edu
Jim Lee books, *Spawn, Savage Dragon*

Kevin Greene, 17/m
cyberfox3@juno.com
Spawn, all X-titles, *Batman*

Joe McIntosh, 20/m
mcintosh@ctv.es
Gen13, Teen Titans, X-titles

Marco Lima, 21/m
marcol@orca.ucd.ie
X-titles, *Deadpool, What If?*

I.C.P.

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LETTER ART

Fans who got their letter art printed this month will each receive copies of *Ka-Zar* #1 and #2 autographed by Andy Kubert, plus a copy of this issue of *Wizard* signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff! The creator of the best envelope wins a signed Ka-Zar sketch by Kubert, plus the signed comics and signed *Wizard* issue! (Thanks very much for the loot, Andy!) Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address **and a list of characters depicted** on the **back** of your envelope. Good luck!

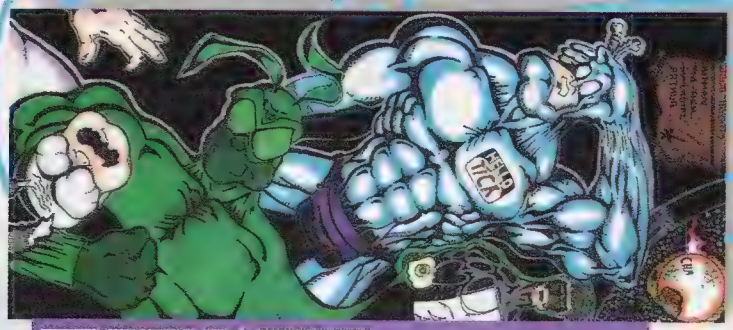
THE PRIZE

envelope of the month

SUPERMAN
Neeraj Patel LaSalle, Quebec, Canada

BATMAN'S WOMEN
Chad Bergman Douglas, WY

THE HUNT FOR WIZARD'S BUNNY
Bobby Henley Priddy, TX



THE TICK'S JLA TRYOUT
Trent Sagunsky Neenah, WI

we're in the home stretch...

2) Remember when the Tick lost his arms? Who would win in a fight between the armless Tick and the armless Savage Dragon?

3) Is it me, or are all vice-presidents except Spiro Agnew, Gerald Ford and George Bush the same guy?

4) Is Attorney General Janet Reno a man, a woman, or both?

Victor Burnette
datenoseji@aol.com

Here you go:

1) Hopefully rotting in a very dark, very hot, very stinky corner of Hell.

2) That's a tough one. For an expert, although probably biased opinion, I asked Dragon creator Erik Larsen, who says, "The Dragon would squash the Tick like the bug he is." But as much as I love the Dragon, I've gotta put my money on the Tick.

3) Pretty much. Seeing as how the veep has no constitutionally prescribed duties other than breaking a tie in the Senate, it's fairly inevitable that they all take on the same pabulum quality. In fact, Thomas R. Marshall, the vice-president under Woodrow Wilson, was once quoted as saying "The vice-presidency isn't worth a warm bucket of spit." He was right.

4) Yes.

Yow! Things are getting political! That must mean it's time for me to leave. Remember to vote this November, and remember that until next month, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

If he were a sportscoat, he'd be plaid. If he were a building material, he'd be drywall. He's Jim McLauchlin, and he's not afraid to belch in mixed company.

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The Only Thing You Know is the Names!

THE ATOM #1
DAN JURGENS · PAUL RYAN

DOOM PATROL #1
DAN JURGENS · SEAN CHEN · KEVIN CONRAD

THE FLASH #1
TODD DEZAGO · GARY FRANK · CAM SMITH

GREEN LANTERN #1
JAMES ROBINSON · J.H. WILLIAMS III · MICK GRAY

THE JOKER #1
KARL KESEL · MATT HALEY · TOM SIMMONS

METAL MEN #1
RON MARZ · MIKE MCKONE · MARK MCKENNA

NIGHTWING #1
JOHN OSTRANDER · JAN DUURSEMA

SEA DEVILS #1
KURT BUSIEK · VINCE GIARRANO · TOM PALMER

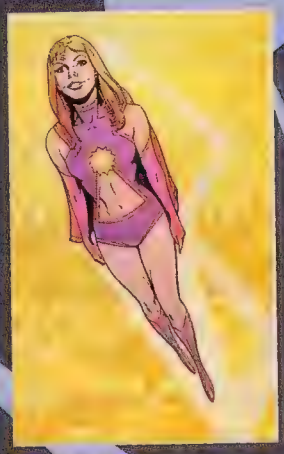
THE SECRET SIX #1
CHUCK DIXON · TOM GRUMMETT · LARY STUCKER

THE ATOM

METAL MEN

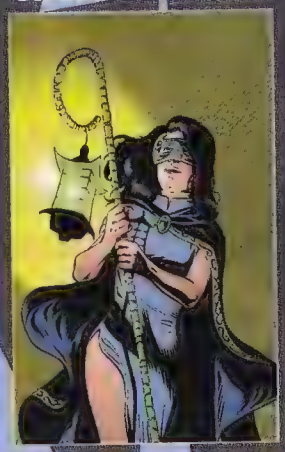
THE JOKER

For one week in October, they're the stars.



THE FLASH

GREEN LANTERN



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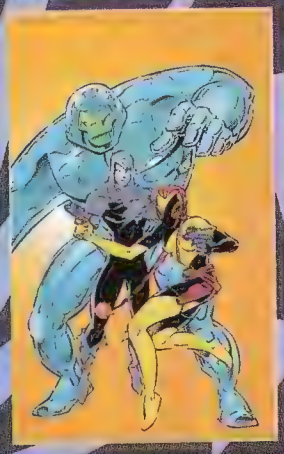
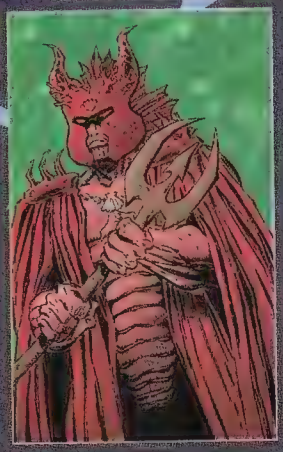


NIGHTWING

SEA DEVILS



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JLA Grows in Rank

'JLA Junior' highlights four new series planned for late '97/early '98

It's officially "The Franchise."

DC Comics is expanding the **Justice League of America**'s base of operations with four new series related to the popular ongoing *JLA* title in late 1997 and early '98. Rather conveniently, DC plans to publish stories that deal directly with the JLA's past, present and future in the *JLA: Year One* and *JLA: Paradise Lost* mini-series, and a new and intriguing project tentatively titled *JLA Junior*.

THE FUTURE

Looking to the future of the JLA, **Todd Dezago** (*Sensational Spider-Man*) co-writes ***JLA: World Without Adults*** with regular *JLA* writer **Grant Morrison**. *World Without Adults* is slated as a three-issue series with a December '97 or January '98 release. No artist is determined yet for this project that will set the stage for an ongoing series tentatively titled *JLA Junior* in mid-1998 to be written solely by Dezago.

"The whole question is," according to Dezago, "who would be the Justice League if the Justice League disappeared?" Young DC stars Robin, Superboy and Impulse have to step up when a mysterious villain makes all the adults in the world disappear. The three young heroes join forces to return the adults to the DCU. "There'll be a kid world and an adult world," said Dezago. "And the Juniors will have to bridge the gap. How they wind up doing it is so cool."

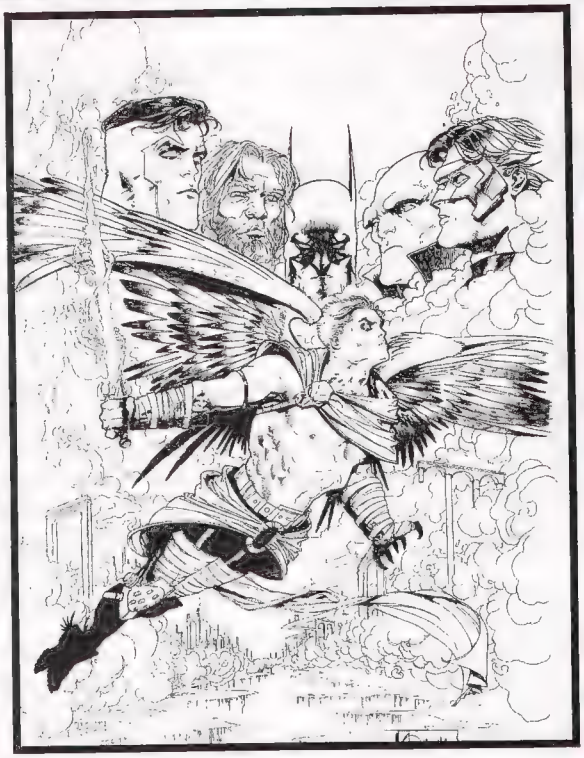
Dezago says the general plan for *JLA Junior* is fun and light, and the team will differ immensely from DC's other young team, The Teen Titans. "The Titans are a family. But these are guys who just enjoy hanging out together. The Titans' consequences are more serious and dire. JLA Junior is a boy's club. It's the Little Rascals with superpowers."

JLA Junior should also provide a comic relief counterpoint to *JLA*. "Grant's greatest chore every month," said Dezago, "is coming up with galaxy-threatening villains. Mine is coming up with a crazy accidental event that happens while my guys are going bowling. If the JLA motto is 'Save the World!,'

JLA: Year One **(cover to #1 shown below) examines the team's early days, while Zauriel might not survive his first mini-series (opposite).**

then the Junior motto is 'Oops!'"

All in all, DC is banking on a big future for the JLA, and Dezago thinks it's with good reason. "The JLA are the DC Universe's big guns," he said. "People are interested in seeing all sides of them whether it be in a solo book, a look at their past or just them hanging out."



THE PAST

Writers **Mark Waid** (*Ka-Zar*) and **Brian Augustyn** (*Ash*) take the JLA back to the Silver Age with penciler **Barry Kitson** (*Azrael*) in tow for the 12-issue maxi-series ***JLA: Year One***, premiering in November. *Year One* examines the JLA's early history and stars the team's original five members: Aquaman, Black Canary, Flash (Barry Allen), Green Lantern (Hal Jordan) and Martian Manhunter. Waid's plan is to focus on the interpersonal development of the JLA, "rather than have a supervillain in every issue. We're interested in the *why* behind why Flash and Green Lantern aren't friends [at first]. We're going to get a lot of mileage out of these guys, both in their suits as superheroes and out of their costumes as people."

Year One has the JLA emerging into a world where superheroes are none too prevalent. Set in a time after the high-profile Justice Society of America has retired and only fringe groups like the Challengers of the Unknown and Doom Patrol exist in the minds of the average DC Universe man on the street, Waid is setting up *Year One* as the story of the JLA reestablishing the glory and grandeur of the traditional superhero. "It gives me a chance to restate and reinvent who these great characters are and show once again just what they mean to the world of DC," he said.

The series will come to an explosive conclusion as all the existing Silver Age JLA members and other DCU heroes like Green Arrow, the Atom and the aforementioned Doom Patrol battle together to thwart an alien invasion of Earth.

THE PRESENT

Zauriel's back, but for how long?

JLA: Paradise Lost, written by **Mark Millar** (*Swamp Thing*) with art by **Ariel Olivetti** (*The Last Avengers Story*) examines Zauriel, the angelic character that debuted in *JLA #6*. *Paradise Lost* is scheduled as a three-issue mini-series beginning in November.

"Originally, everyone thought Zauriel would join the JLA, but now we're not even sure he'll survive this mini-series," said JLA Group Editor Dan Raspler. "This is not a soft series. It's extremely heavy stuff."

Beginning directly after the events in *JLA #7*, where Zauriel was chased from Heaven to Earth by the king angel Asmodel and his army, *Paradise Lost* will, in the words of Raspler, "explain the backstory of the cosmology of Heaven's relation to Earth in the DCU and show the role of angels."

Seems that ages ago when God cast Lucifer and the rebellious angels out of Heaven, he didn't get 'em all. Apparently, some rebel angels are still left in Heaven and Asmodel is one of them. "Asmodel has plans for taking over Heaven, and Zauriel knows about them," said Raspler. "That's the reason why he was chased from Heaven in the first place." Worst of all, Asmodel has a co-conspirator in his plot: the devilish being **Neron**, who was introduced in DC's 1995 *Underworld Unleashed* mini-series. But strangely enough, Zauriel has no intention of doing anything with his information. "He thinks God can handle himself," said Raspler. "Zauriel gets chased out of Heaven just because Neron isn't comfortable with anyone knowing the plan."

The subtext to this bizarre tale of Heaven and Earth? Love. Zauriel has been the guardian angel to a human woman named Shannon Coyne since her birth, and has fallen in love with her. "He's more concerned with helping Shannon than anything," Raspler said. "He's been alive a million years, and he's to the point where he'll sacrifice angelic immortality for human love."

The series climaxes with a giant war in Heaven with Zauriel, Shannon and even the Martian Manhunter in attendance, and no one's future is guaranteed. ■*Matthew Senreich*

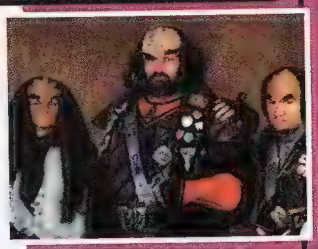


Photo: Paul Schwartz

Klingons stranded on Earth after Bird of Prey hits power lines. "Everywhere we go, people yell at us, tell us to get lives and throw jelly doughnuts at our heads," said confused Klingon commander. "So we usually pop a cap in their asses."

Photo: Paul Schwartz

Ultraman gets a makeover for the '90s. "I feelin' hip, happenin' and ready for the new millennium!," commented oddly familiar robot. "But why d they have to take 'Ir' Ultraman' away?"

Photo: Paul Schwartz

Bod has banned at local comic cons. "I eventually got used to the smell of the fanboys," remarked rare female show attendant. "But c'mon, anybody wearin' a hat like this deserves a ruptured kidney."

ahead

MARVEL VS. LIEFELD!

GAIMAN RETURNS TO SANDMAN!

X-MEN/STAR TREK SEQUEL!

Fighting American Marches On Despite Marvel Lawsuit

Change is in the wind for Fighting American.

You knew it had to happen: Marvel Comics' **Captain America** and Awesome Entertainment's **Fighting American** squared off for battle...in court.

A U.S. District Court judge ruled on August 20, that if Awesome Entertainment swore an affidavit to make changes in its rendition of Fighting American, the court would not halt publication of Awesome's *Fighting American*.

Marvel filed suit against Awesome to stop what a Marvel press release called, "Awesome's particular rendition of Fighting American, which seems to have drawn far more inspiration from Captain America than from its purported source." That source is the original Fighting American, a character created by **Joe Simon** and **Jack Kirby**, the same men who penned the first Captain America tale.

At the heart of the conflict is **Rob Liefeld**, a principal of Awesome and former Marvel freelancer who wrote and drew *Captain America* as part of Marvel's "Heroes Reborn" deal. After Liefeld was fired by Marvel, he created a new character called Agent: America and later licensed Fighting American from Simon and the estate of Kirby. Awesome contested Marvel's suit. The outcome: minor changes will have to be made in Awesome's Fighting American. Specifically, color and shape of the belt and the cuffs on Fighting American's costume will have to be changed from Awesome's promo pieces, and the Fighting American will not be allowed to *throw* his shield.

"I couldn't be happier," Liefeld said. "We appreciate the court's ruling. We keep the shield, the eagle on the head, the star on the chest, the red-white-and-blue. We're thrilled that we emerged victorious."

Marvel also claimed victory. "It's been our position all along that we're not against Fighting American," Marvel Publisher Shirrel Rhoades said. "It's just that we don't want confusion between the characters. It's Marvel's policy to protect its trademarks."

As *Wizard* went to press, *Fighting American* #1 was scheduled to hit comic stores on September 3. "In the end," Awesome Publisher Jeph Loeb said, "the fans will decide the ultimate fate of Fighting American and Captain America, and that's all we ever wanted." ■ *Jim McLauchlin*

'Gen[13]' Gets Overhaul with New Creators Joining

A new year brings new creators on *Gen[13]*.

With the mega-popular art team of **J. Scott Campbell** and **Alex Garner** moving on to the new *Danger Girl* series, WildStorm Productions decided the time was right to give *Gen[13]* a complete overhaul.

Gen[13] #25, hitting stores in December, is a 40-page anniversary issue with a 10-page back-up story by a new creative team that takes over full-time with issue #26: writer **John Arcudi** (*The Mask, Major Bummer*) and artists **Gary Frank** and **Cam Smith** (*Supergirl*). How did this creative change come to be?

"I did some proposals for *Gen[13] Bootleg*," Arcudi said. "The editors really liked one of them that I had Gary Frank in mind for to draw. Next thing I know, WildStorm called and asked if I'd like *Gen[13]* full time."

Gary Frank joins the *Gen[13]* team.

Arcudi jumped at the chance. "I like to write fun stuff, and fun has always been the tone of the book," he said. "Plus, there are only 25 issues out. Not too much is carved in stone. I can hopefully be part of the growth of the characters, and that's what really appeals to me. I'm hoping to put my own stamp on the book."

That stamp includes a focus on two characters Arcudi thinks are underdeveloped: Freefall and Rainmaker. "They haven't been explored enough. I think there's a lot of rich territory that can be covered there." Might part of that territory be Rainmaker's ambiguous sexuality, most strongly hinted at back in *Gen[13]* #2, when she came on to fellow female team member Freefall? Arcudi just may go there, in a tone much more serious than what fans are used to from the book. "It's definitely something interesting to explore," he said. "I'm not sure if I will tackle that, but if I do, I definitely won't turn it into a circus." ■ *Jim McLauchlin*

BUZZ BOX

The inside scoop on the comic industry

- **Supes is Back?** Looks like December will bring a new reprisal of a DC Silver Age classic, the story of "Superman-Red and Superman-Blue." In it, Supes gets split into two separate beings. Could this be the lead-in to the return of "Classic Superman?" Here's hopin'...
- **The *New* Marvel Universe?** Maybe. Rumblings are starting that the twisted mind of writer Warren Ellis (*Transmetropolitan*) is gearing up to do a 12-issue mini-series for all of 1999 that will completely transform the Marvel Universe for the new millennium.
- **Madureira's Last Shot!** At Marvel, at least. Joe Madureira, the hyper-popular penciler of *Uncanny X-Men*, has time for one last book before his Marvel contract expires. The rumor mill has him doing the long-rumored X-Men/JLA crossover or a Spider-Man one-shot.
- **Come Together!** Word is that Image Comics is gearing up for another all-Image crossover featuring the whole shootin' match worth of characters in early '98 under the working title "Alternate Image." Image partner Jim Valentino is heading up efforts.
- **Loeb and Sale Reunite!** Buzz hears that Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale, the popular creative team from *Batman: The Long Halloween*, are trying to talk DC into a *Superman: Year One* four-issue mini in summer '98.
- **McGuinness Jumps Ship!** Looks like Ed McGuinness, the penciler of Marvel's hot *Deadpool* title, has left his *Deadpool* post. Latest reports have him heading to Awesome Entertainment to hopefully do a *Fighting American* mini-series in early '98.

CORRECTION!

In *Wizard* #73's "Dressed for Success" feature, we incorrectly identified the "Wolverines" as being Michigan State University's sports teams. Duh. Michigan State is the Spartans, and the University of Michigan is the Wolverines. We blew it and we apologize to Big 10 fans everywhere.

Also, in *Wizard* #73's *Starman* review for "The Skinny," we accidentally listed the wrong issue numbers. Under "Issues Reviewed," it should have read #24-#33. We're sorry for any confusion this may have caused.

Hey! Remember that *Evil Ernie* #1/2 offer we had in last month's *Wizard*? Well, we forgot to tell ya it's got a glow-in-the-dark cover! The order deadline ain't until November 17, so there's still plenty of time to get one.

Cable's 50th Issue Marked by Mega-Brawl

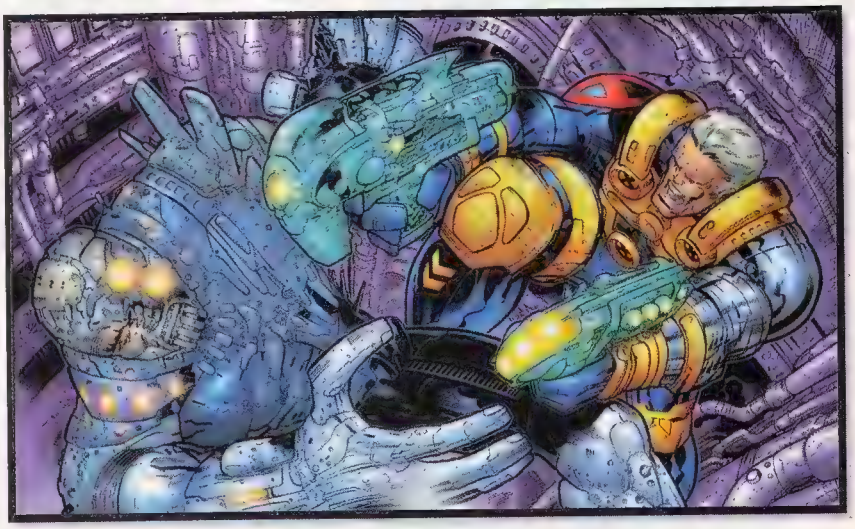
Here's one birthday present that Cable wishes would have stayed wrapped.

For the birthday event of his 50th issue in November, monthly *Cable* guys **James Robinson** and **Jose Ladronn** have the time-tossed mutant facing a foe 150 years in the making—the Harbinger of **Apocalypse**.

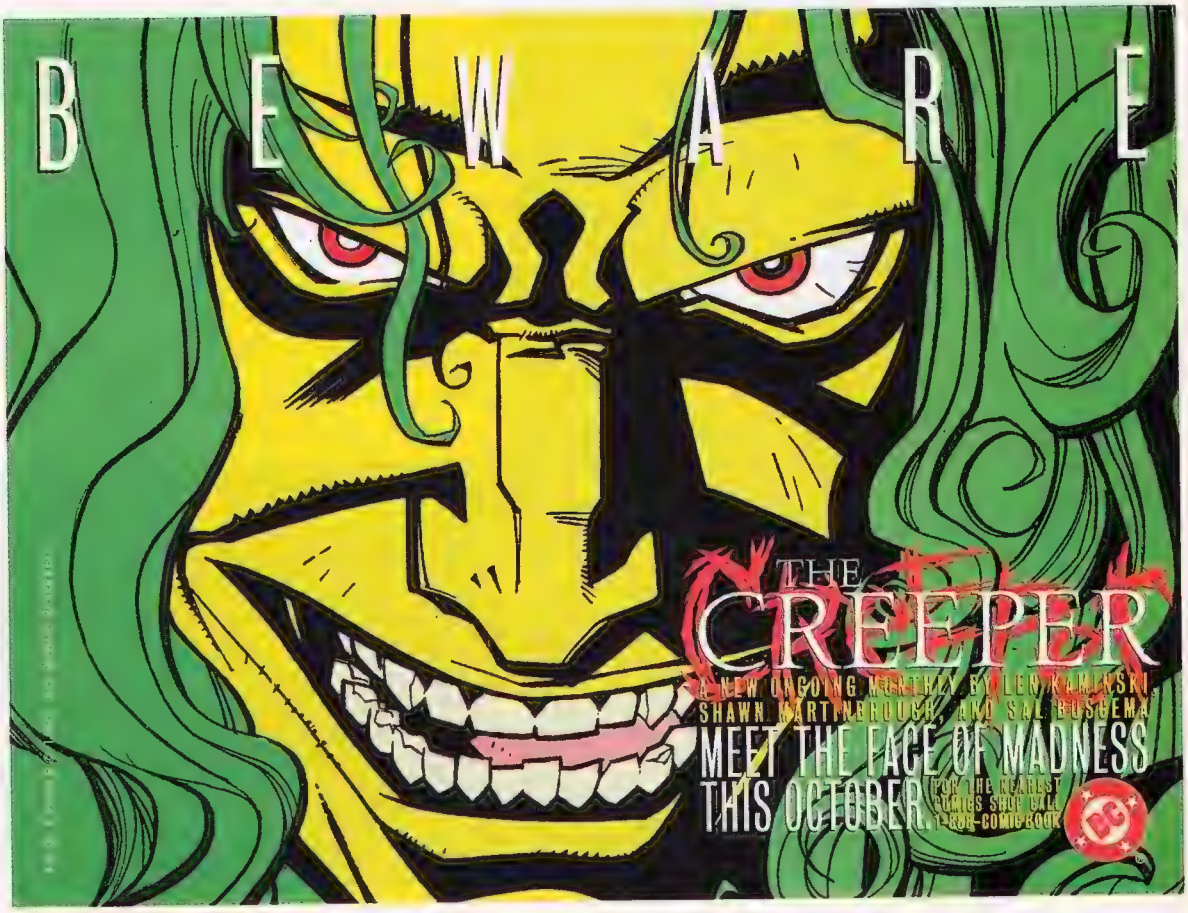
After Apocalypse was defeated 150 years ago, as chronicled in the ***Further Adventures of Cyclops & Phoenix*** mini-series, he left a man behind to be transformed into a weapon of mass destruction. Buried deep beneath London, the secret of his existence was known only within the upper echelons of the notorious Hellfire Club.

Now in the present, Hellfire Club members Sebastian Shaw and Donald Pierce want to dig the Harbinger up and use him to their advantage. But according to *Cable* editor Mark Powers, "Of course, they seriously miscalculate their ability to do this." Cable, the telekinetic-powered mutant from the future, must get involved as he faces an enemy that's the embodiment of Apocalypse's "Survival of the Fittest" mantra—adaptable to any environment and to any foe.

This single battle ties in heavily to the overall story concept that Cable must stop the rise of Apocalypse before it happens. "Despite his best efforts so far, the crux point upon which the future takes a turn for the worse seems fast approaching," said Powers. "And that's something Cable's deathly worried about." ■ *Greg Matiasevich*



Cable (right) takes on Apocalypse's ultimate weapon in *Cable* #50.



Kingpin Lures Lee and Romita Sr. Back Together

One of the baddest villains in the Marvel Universe is making his way back to the top. Funny thing is, two of the nicest and most respected men from Marvel are letting him do it.

Kingpin is a November-shipping, 48-page one-shot that starts Wilson Fisk, the Kingpin of Crime, back up the ladder to becoming the criminal overlord that he once was. The story's told by the legendary *Amazing Spider-Man* team of writer **Stan Lee** and penciler **John Romita Sr.**, who introduced the Kingpin way back in 1967's *ASM* #50.

"I got a call from Bob Harras, who asked if I would write a Kingpin story," said Lee, the Marvel founder who works in the West Coast Marvel Films office. "I told him I was too busy. But then he said John was doing the art, and I told him I was in."

Lee's busy schedule still prevented him from writing the issue fully, so he scripted over a plot written by current *ASM* writer **Tom DeFalco**.

"Kingpin's been out of the country, but now he wants to reclaim what was once his," said Editor Ralph Macchio. "He frames **Spider-Man** for murder and brings him into conflict with **Daredevil**, who wants to bring [Spidey] to justice."

All of which is quite a treat for Romita, who also penciled *Daredevil* early in his Marvel career. But isn't the artist retired? "It seems like I'm working more now than when I was full-time," said Romita. "But when it's a Spider-Man and Daredevil project, it's hard to resist."

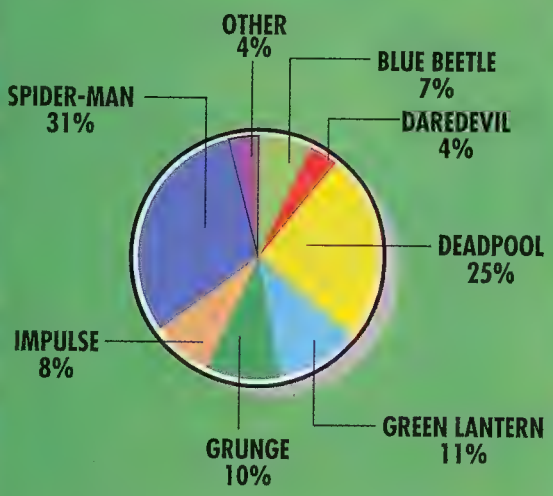
With a plot that calls for the return of a major character, and the definitive Spidey and DD artist on the case, is Stan's scripting job easy? "Sure," he said. "John draws a better story than anyone. But I like to think I brought a little something. I do have some small expertise in that area." ■ *Jim McLauchlin*

Lee and Romita Sr. are in rare form once again, teaming on *Kingpin*.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Ever wonder what kind of tricks the superhero community plays on each other during Halloween? We do. So for this Halloween issue, we asked the online trick-or-treaters of our "Wizard World" America Online forum who they thought could pull off the greatest Halloween prank.

WHO'S THE GREATEST PRANKSTER?



Who's got the best sense of humor in all comicdom? **Spider-Man!** "Plainly and simply, Spider-Man is the funniest comic character around," posted one fan. "He's witty and wise, and he was comics' first true light-hearted hero."

Marvel Comics looks like the House of Humor, as **Deadpool** came in a close second to Spidey. "The way Joe Kelly writes Deadpool is the way Spidey used to be," said one respondent. "And Deadpool's also a killer, so he's more prone to have that real twisted nature in his practical jokes."

Other notable write-in votes were the X-Men's Iceman, Ambush Bug and the Joker, who wasn't a hero last time we checked. But hey—he could certainly pull off one heckuva Halloween prank! ■ *William Hickey*

Lee's Deal to Do Marvel Books Put on Hold

The deal between **Marvel Comics** and **Jim Lee** to have Lee "oversee" a family of Marvel books—planned as *Defenders*, *Dr. Strange*, *Nick Fury* and *Punisher*—is on indefinite hold.

The relaunch of these existing Marvel characters in new titles was originally scheduled for a November/December time frame, but Marvel has confirmed that none of these titles are part of its November or December solicitations. Lee, a writer, artist and head of **WildStorm Productions**, said, "The way I want to do things would require the people who own Marvel to sign off. Until the financial situation there gets wholly squared away, they're kind of distracted. I can understand that."

Lee's involvement would be as what he termed an "executive producer" on the titles, a situation in which he would write treatments and plots, and then hire writers and artists to execute them. But at the present rate, summer of '98 looks like the earliest Lee could take on these titles, if he does at all. "Marvel hasn't said they're going to do something else with these characters yet," Lee continued. "If our arrangement happens, great. If not, it's unfortunate, but these things happen in this business." ■ *Jim McLauchlin*

we LOOKED it up

Bu•sick (byü sik) Kurt David noun 1960-present: 1 comic writer known for bringing an "up close and personal" style to such titles as *Marvels*, *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* and *Astro City* 2 soon-to-be-writer of "Heroes Return" versions of *Iron Man* and *Avengers* 3 how a doctor with a lisp will tell you that you're ill

Photo: Paul Schinaldi

Second Star Trek/X-Men Crossover Slated for February

After defeating the Borg in "Star Trek: First Contact," The "Next Generation" *Enterprise* crew boldly goes to encounter…the X-Men?

Marvel Comics has announced that it will produce a second Star Trek/X-Men crossover entitled ***X-Men/Star Trek: Second Contact*** due in February 1998.

Dan Abnett and Ian Edginton write the 64-page prestige format one-shot and **Cary Nord** (*Daredevil*) will pencil. The first highly successful X-Men/Star Trek crossover featured the "Classic" Trek crew, but *Second Contact* will feature the "Next Generation" crew teaming up with your favorite X-Men including Wolverine, Kitty Pride, Colossus and Nightcrawler for a story that takes place directly after the 1996 "Star Trek: First Contact" movie.

"En route back to their own time after the events seen in 'First Contact,' the Trek crew led by Picard encounter a weird space anomaly," said Abnett. "It deposits them in orbit around the Marvel Universe Earth in 1998, setting the stage for them to meet the X-Men."

From there, they go up against the Borg and an army of Sentinels orchestrated by a mysterious Marvel villain.

"But more than villains, this story has to do with classic moments in both Trek and X-History," said Abnett. "We'll jumble up members of the two teams. They'll find themselves at different points in their own histories, trying to make sure the world and its history work out the way they're supposed to."

Also included in the crossover are cameo appearances aplenty. Look for Marvel's **Thunderbolts** and Trek's Benjamin Sisko, back when he was just a Commander. Abnett also promised, "the surprise return of two X-Men characters that have not been seen in a long time." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

Star Trek/X-Men: Round 2.

Dark Horse Retains Star Wars License

The Force is still with **Dark Horse Comics**.

The current comic licensee can continue making **Star Wars** comics until the year 2004. Dark Horse, which has had the comic publishing rights since 1991, held off challenges for the license from other companies, including **WildStorm**. And with comic adaptations of three prequel movies to come with the release of said new movies, the license is truly a coveted one.

"No bones about it," said Dark Horse's Star Wars Editor Bob Cooper. "We were sweating it out for a while, but we're pretty happy now."

Dark Horse can now move ahead on a Lucasfilm-approved, late-1998 comic called ***Vader's Quest***, which takes place between "Star Wars" and "The Empire Strikes Back." **Darko Macan** (*Grendel Tales*) will write the story, while **Dave Gibbons** (*Watchmen*) illustrates.

Meanwhile, Dark Horse has picked up the rights to publish comics based on the collectible card game ***Magic: The Gathering***. Plans for the Dark Horse version of *M:TG* call for an initial four-issue mini-series to be released in March '98 by writer **Mike Grell** (*Green Arrow*) and artist **Pop Mhan** (*Ghost Rider*). Dark Horse M:TG Editor Peet Janes plans to take the title in a different direction than the previous Acclaim Comics series.

"We want people to buy this because they're buying comic books," Janes said. To that end, Dark Horse will not include *Magic* game cards with the comics. "We noticed in Acclaim's sales patterns that the first few issues that had cards in them did extremely well, but as soon as they took the cards out, the numbers plummeted. We want to concentrate on couching our stories in a sword-and-sorcery setting, but giving them more of a contemporary feel."

Dark Horse has also re-acquired the comic license to the "**Terminator**" film property that it previously held in the early '90s. No new "Terminator" projects are slated as yet. ■ *Paul M. Anderson*

NOTICE OF APOLOGY

MR. TAKUMI NAGAYASU: *THE LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH: TUNNEL TOWN*

We committed a serious error in distributing a version of the Dark Horse title *The Legend of Mother Sarah: Tunnel Town* without properly crediting the artist, Mr. Takumi Nagayasu. All versions of this title should prominently bear the name of Mr. Nagayasu on the front cover. We wish to make a full and unreserved apology to Mr. Nagayasu for this infringement of his moral rights and to readers for any confusion that our actions have caused. We undertake immediately to cease distributing the flawed version. We further undertake to provide any purchasers of the flawed version with a proper copy of the title in exchange for their original purchase. Readers should send their purchase together with their postal details to us at the address given below.

Dark Horse Comics
Department MSX
10956 SE Main Street
Milwaukie, OR 97222

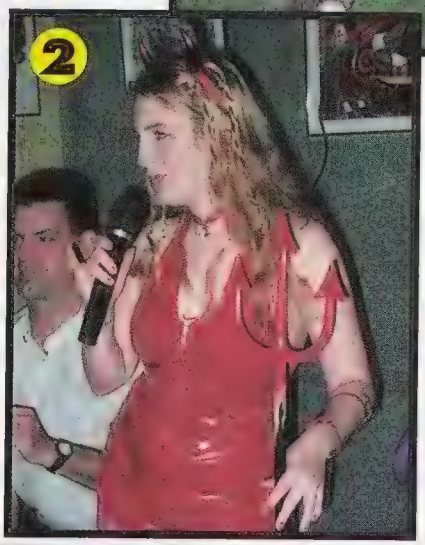
Openers Mixes Drinks and Superheroes

"This one was tame," confessed *Ash* writer/artist **Joe Quesada**. "These parties are usually wilder. Once we had stripping midgets and an electric chair."

Quesada surveyed the packed soiree at Openers, a Manhattan, N.Y., bar (located at 24th street and 3rd Avenue) where many top comic creators celebrated the grand opening of an outdoor superhero beer garden. Eight giant acrylic paintings of superheroes adorn the walls of the garden. For several months, Marvel Comics freelancer Scott Elmer projected slides on the walls and drew over them at night to complete the project. It's now open for business.

According to Quesada, Openers is, "*the* comic book bar in New York. The bar and staff have appeared in *Ash*, *Shi* and a few other comics." This party drew a diverse costumed crowd including **Mark Waid**, **Joe Jusko**, **Amanda Conner** and more.

Additional characters will soon join the collage that currently features **Ash**, **Shi**, **Preacher**, **Hitman**, **Eudaemon**, **Vampirella** and others in the garden. And, of course, there'll be plenty more parties. ■ *Buddy Scalera*



1) The beer garden party served a dual function by also marking the birthdays of Jimmy Palmiotti (left) and Billy Tucci. 2) Devilish *Vampirella* artist Amanda Conner performs her karaoke version of "Fever" to a howling crowd. 3) Joe Quesada doing a not-too-shabby rendition of Elvis. Portions of his "flasher" costume are blocked out for reasons of good taste. 4) Mark Waid as the fastest man alive.

Photos: Buddy Scalera

DOUBLE TAKES

Hey! Who *was* that redhead who did the three-second cameo in the banquet scene in the "Spawn" movie? Could it be Angela, the Spawn-hunting supporting character? Beau Smith, marketing honcho for Todd McFarlane Productions confirms it: "We did that as a little tip of the hat to the comic fans, the people who *really* know the material. It's a little extra that we threw in for their appreciation."

Does this mean that a "Spawn" sequel featuring Angela is coming? Spawn creator Todd McFarlane said only, "Who knows? That stuff hasn't even been planned yet. Anything's possible, and I know the readers love Angela."

Photo: Peter Iovino

Rare Miller/Bisley Comic Hits America

When Oni Press opened for business in spring of '97, co-publisher **Bob Schreck** hoped for a slow and steady course to success.

Yeah, right.

Already, the fledging Portland-based company has won the rights to reprint **Frank Miller** and **Simon Bisley**'s "Bad Boy," previously published in installments in the British edition of *GQ* magazine, and signed filmmaker **Kevin Smith** ("Chasing Amy") to write comics based on his hit debut film "Clerks."

The 40-page, full-color magazine-format *Bad Boy*, the story of a young boy struggling to regain his freedom from an oppressive society, will be released in December with a $4.95 cover price.

"It's incredibly good—it's Miller and Bisley!—and it's a shame it's never been available in North America," said Schreck. "I'm already trying to get Miller and Bisley to collaborate on more 'Bad Boy.'"

Meanwhile, Smith's comic-writing debut will be a 15-page story featuring "Clerks" characters Silent Bob and Jay in the monthly *Oni Double Feature #1*, set to be released in January. **Matt Wagner** (*Mage*) handles art chores. Smith's Bob-and-Jay story will be followed up by ***Clerks: The Comic Book***, a 32-page, black-and-white one-shot featuring the "Clerks" characters, scheduled for an early 1998 release. Newcomer Jim Mahfood provides art.

So how come a hot movie director wants to squeeze comic book scripting into an already busy schedule? "I've always been a comics guy, and a *Clerks* comic book seems to make sense," Smith said. "The characters and situations transfer easily from the movies to comics, and comics are a big enough medium to hold anything. In a world where *Hate* can exist as a comic, so can *Clerks*."

Smith said he wants to write more stories based on the "Clerks" characters and hopes it can eventually evolve into a bimonthly title. ■ *Paul M. Anderson*

'Winter's Edge' to Feature New Gaiman 'Sandman' Story

Forget the fruitcake. **Vertigo** has a better treat planned this holiday season: The first **Neil Gaiman** "**Sandman**" story since the series ended with issue #75 in 1996. The tale is but one piece of *Winter's Edge*, a collection of short stories featuring most of the current Vertigo line-up. Sporting a wrap-around cover by **Brian Bolland**, the project hits stores in late November.

With nine stories of varying length packed into a 96-page square-bound edition, the Sandman story, which will feature watercolor art by **John Bolton**, is set to run eight to 10 pages. Appropriately, Gaiman is working with a reduced cast of his usual characters.

"While it's a Sandman story," Gaiman said, "the only member of the Endless in the story is Desire, who is always fun to write. It's mostly about lust."

Other regular Vertigo fare featured in *Winter's Edge* includes a "Hellblazer" story by **Paul Jenkins** and **Paul Pope**, a "Sandman Mystery Theatre" tale by **Matt Wagner**, **Steven T. Seagle** and John K. Snyder, and a "House of Secrets" story by Seagle and Teddy Kristiansen. *Winter's Edge* will also preview two brand-new projects: *The Minx*, a monthly by **Peter Milligan** (*Elektra*) and Sean Phillips (*Hellblazer*), and *Nevada*, a regular mini-series by Steve Gerber (*Howard the Duck*) and Phil Winslade (*Goddess*).

The only regular Vertigo book not represented in *Winter's Edge*? ***Preacher***. According to project editor Shelly Roeberg, *Preacher* creators **Garth Ennis** and **Steve Dillon** didn't want to participate, but did an interview with her which will be included in the special. And Roeberg promises the subject matter of the interview will make up for the lack of story. "Expect fireworks, gunshots and sordid secrets exposed," she warned. ■ *Scott A. Aubrey*

AC COMICS
December sees the launch of ***Hero Hangout***, an anthology title including material AC has been looking to publish as individual titles for a number of years.

ACCLAIM COMICS
Quantum and Woody, the World's Worst Superhero Team, cross over into November's *Solar* #3.

ARCHIE COMICS
Archie brings the highly popular Sega video game ***Nights into Dreams*** into the comic world as it launches a new series in November.

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT
Awesome has inked **Alan Moore** for another year of *Supreme*. Moore is now slated to write the title all the way through #65....November's ***Maximum Mutants*** trade paperback reprints the Marvel/Maximum Press crossovers of 1996-97 with new additional pages for just $19.95.

CARTOON BOOKS
Fone Bone and Smiley Bone must decide whether to trust new *Bone* character Rockjaw (a monster-sized mountain lion) in November's ***Bone*** #30.

CHAOS! COMICS
The Lost #1, a bizarre vampire tale shipping in November, is the first book to be released through the new Chaos! imprint **Breakthrough Entertainment**.

CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT
November's *Shi: East Wind Rain* #1 presents **Shi** and her supporting cast in World War II-era Pearl Harbor, right before Japan's attack—which Shi must prevent. The $3.50 book is painted by Marc Sasso.

DARK HORSE COMICS
Kilian Plunkett fans should check out FAO Schwarz's Holiday Collectible Catalog due out around October. It features an all-new Star Wars cover by Plunkett, as well as a bio on the artist and info on all of Dark Horse's funky Star Wars comics....Speakin' of Star Wars, November sees the launch of the six-issue mini-series *Star Wars: The Last Command*. Timothy Zahn's final book in the trilogy is adapted by Mike Baron and Edvin Biukovic....November sees Ron Marz and Bernie Wrightson's two-part *Batman/Aliens* collected in one volume for $14.95. It'll also include the two-part alien story the duo did as a prequel in *Dark Horse Presents* #101-#102.

DARK MUSE PRODUCTIONS
Scholastic Books has joined with Dark Muse to produce two 80-page graphic novels entitled ***Confessions of a Teenage Vampire***, marking the first comic book venture by Scholastic Books. The books will retail for $4.99, and be written by Terry West and drawn by Steve Ellis (*Lobo*).

DC COMICS
December is "Villains Week," where DC will ship the following one-shots: *Darkseid, Mr. Mxyzptlk, Gog, The Rogues Gallery, Scarecrow, Prometheus* (a new JLA villain) and *Dark Nemesis*....*Legends of the DC Universe* will kick off in January. It's modeled after *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*, with rotating creative teams. The first two storylines star Superman and Wonder Woman, respectively, while the third is a Silver Age Green Lantern/Green Arrow story written by Denny O'Neil....Swamp Thing returns in a January one-shot written and painted by Jon J Muth (*Moonshadow*).. *The Spectre* #62 will be its final issue, shipping in December.

DESTINATION ENTERTAINMENT
TV's **"The Munsters"** rejoins the comic book scene with issue #2, due out in time for a Halloween release.

EVENT COMICS
Fan-favorite writer **James Robinson** (*Starman, Cable*) begins his *Ash* run with the four-part "Fire and Crossfire," starting in November's *Ash* #1, which pits the hero against the nefarious Actor, whose origin is revealed during this story.

HARRIS COMICS
Grant Morrison (*JLA*) and Mark Millar (*Swamp Thing*) pump new blood into Vampirella this November when the two write the new ongoing monthly *Vampirella: Ascending Evil* series.

IMAGE COMICS
• HIGHBROW ENTERTAINMENT
November's ***Savage Dragon: The Fallen*** collects issues #7-#11 of the popular title with brand-spankin'-new bridging pages thrown in by writer/artist Erik Larsen.

• TOP COW COMICS
November's ***Darkness Collected Edition #3*** is available alone, or with regular or limited-edition custom slipcases.

KITCHEN SINK PRESS
The artwork of legendary underground artist **Robert Crumb** (*Fritz the Cat*) is captured in *The R. Crumb Coffee Table Art Book*, a 256-page hardcover from Kitchen Sink Press. Look for it in October with a $40 price tag.

KNIGHTSTONE COMICS
Tekken, based on the super-popular video game, is an eight-issue mini-series featuring the events of both the original *Tekken* and *Tekken 2*. It's scheduled for an October release.

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS
LNS is producing a new series starring the Golden Age heroine **Sheena**, Queen of the Jungle, in 1998. European novelist Gabriel Cain will be writing.

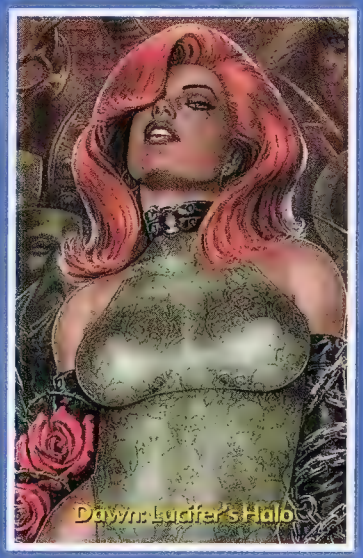
LONE STAR PRESS
Heroic Tales #3 wraps up the first story arc featuring Amazon and stars a brand-new character, Ace of Diamonds, in her own back-up story.

MARVEL COMICS
The Black Widow may be onto the **Thunderbolts'** secret in *Thunderbolts* #9....October's *Deadpool* #11 is a triple-sized issue so big that comic legends **Stan Lee and John Romita** had to pitch in and help....*Quicksilver* #2, shipping in October, will be available with a **Michael Golden** variant cover....The macabre **Man-Thing** guest-stars in *Marvel Team-Up* #4, with guest artist Darick Robertson.

MYTHIC COMICS
The bimonthly *Velvet: Tales of the Assassin* #3 hits stores in November and features the pencils of Yvel Guichet (*Ninjak*) with a painted cover by **Peter Palmiotti** (*Aquaman*).

SCHISM COMICS
The Collected Bru-Hed trade paperback collects the first four-issue mini-series and celebrates 10 years of **Bru-Hed** publishing.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT
Dawn: Lucifer's Halo collects the mondo-popular *Dawn* mini-series this November. It'll come with at least eight new pages by **Joseph Michael Linsner** and retail for $19.95....Mark Crilley's *Akiko* #20 features a solo tale of supporting cast member Mr. Beeba....November's *Kiss & Tell* #1 features four short stories, one of which is illustrated by Ethan Van Sciver (*Cyberfrog*).


Dawn: Lucifer's Halo

TOPPS COMICS
Sci-fi writer **Kevin J. Anderson** is adapting his *X-Files: Ground Zero* novel into comics form for Topps. Issue #1 of a four-issue series hits in November.

byte this

WHAT'S UP ON WIZARD WORLD

News Flash! You couldn't get news faster than this if you worked for the *Daily Planet*! Wizard World's "Online News" section is updated constantly with amazing comic book and entertainment news. If you're a news junkie, you need to visit Wizard World online every day. Don't miss a thing!

You demanded pictures? Well, we're gonna give you enough pictures to tap out your entire hard drive. With our newly reorganized system, you can download those goofy "Big Shots" we feature in *Wizard* and *ToyFare*'s Toy Price Guides. Plus, each month you can download *both* covers of *Wizard* and save them on your computer!

Can't remember when Winged Victory debuted in *Astro City*? Not sure who *Witchblade*'s Joe Siry is? This is your chance to find out every nitpicky comic detail you've never figured out! *Wizard* Price Guide Editor Lars Pearson has loaned Wizard World his incredible organizational skills to painstakingly create a new feature called "Everything Of...", which archives hot series such as ***Witchblade, Thunderbolts, Kabuki, Astro City*** and ***Ghost***. Each title features a summary of every issue and a character index. New titles will be added every month. The "Everything Of..." section makes it easy-as-heck to jump on a series.

Every Tuesday, Wizard Unplugged features the best guests in all of cyberspace. Don't miss Gareb Shamus on September 30, and Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti on October 7.

Plus, for the creepy season... don't miss our special chat guests Dave Bogart and Amanda Conner of Harris Comics on October 21, and Brian Pulido of Chaos! Comics on October 28. Spooky fun!

On America Online, Keyword: Wizard.

CHAT HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE SPECIAL EVENTS ROOM

SEPTEMBER 30 (Tuesday)
- *WIZARD* UNPLUGGED: GAREB SHAMUS (The Cheese Speaks!)

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

OCTOBER 7 (Tuesday)
- *WIZARD* UNPLUGGED: JOE QUESADA AND JIMMY PALMIOTTI

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

OCTOBER 18 (Saturday)
- INDY COMICS CHAT

Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)

OCTOBER 20 (Monday)
- BREAKING IN WITH DAVID CAMPITI OF GLASS HOUSE GRAPHICS

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

OCTOBER 21 (Tuesday)
- *WIZARD* UNPLUGGED: DAVE BOGART AND AMANDA CONNER

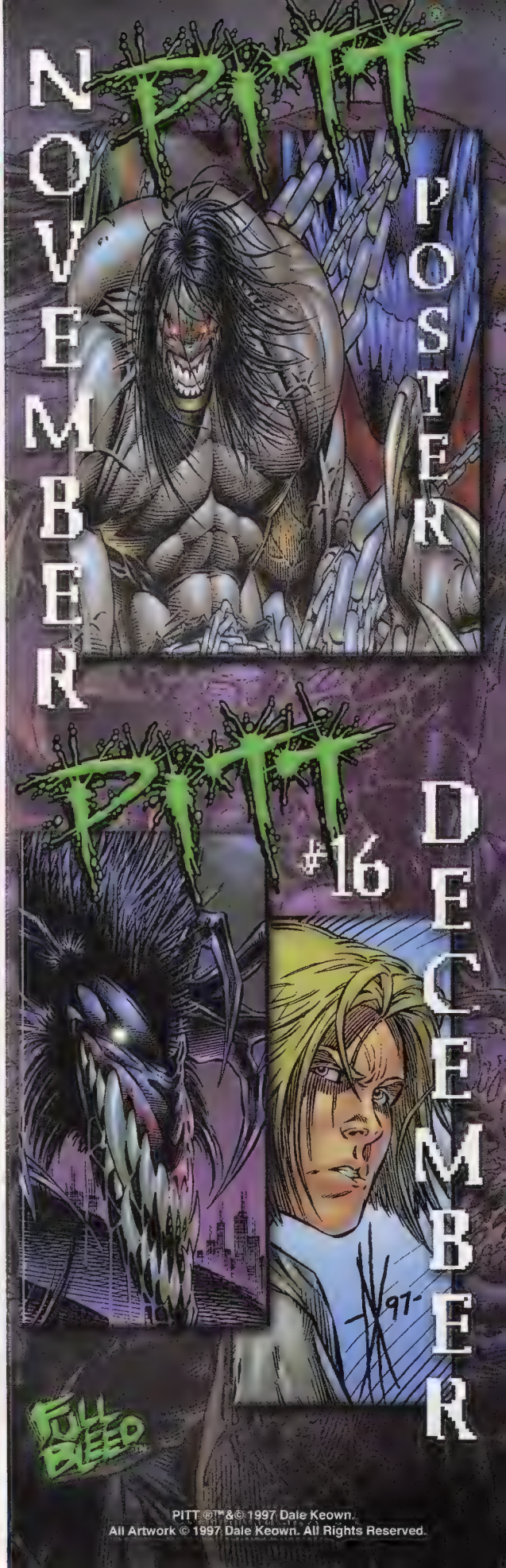
Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

OCTOBER 28 (Tuesday)
- *WIZARD* UNPLUGGED: BRIAN PULIDO OF CHAOS! COMICS

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

Check online for full chat schedules including club-hosted chats

■ *Buddy Scalera* (WizardTGTC@aol.com)



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A Comic Convention Fiesta In Mexico

By Dan Jurgens

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Writer/artist Dan Jurgens recently attended a major comic convention in Mexico City. Here's his travel log...]

Picture this: I climb out of a car. I'm immediately surrounded by a dozen white-shirted security staffers. But this time, they're not looking to bust me for something. They're actually on *my* side. There's a multitude of enthusiastic fans all around, but I can't understand the language they're speaking. It's not like I'm Mick Jagger on tour. In fact, I'm *looking* for Mick Jagger, 'cause this treatment just can't be for me and the others in my profession. We're just a bunch of comic writers and artists. At a convention. In Mexico.

THE BUILD-UP

My invitation to the Convention of Comics, Cinema, Fiction and Fantasy in Mexico City (or "*M.E.C.Y.F. Internacional*," once the Spanish translation is done) arrives in the form of a videotape shot at the previous year's convention. It shows throngs of enthusiastic attendees clogging the aisles. Denny O'Neil, DC's Batman group editor and one of last year's guests, gives me a call plugging the convention, calling it the best he's ever done. That's good enough for me. I respond to the invite with a hearty "yes."

Unfortunately, attending a convention means no work for a few days. Working at fever pace, I wrap up the last pages of *Teen Titans* #13, plot #14, and outline a *Titans* special project for later this year. New cover sketches are overdue, so I promise myself I'll do those on the plane or in the hotel.

A whopping 20,000 people attended the *M.E.C.Y.F. Internacional* convention every day of the show!

All photos courtesy of Dan Jurgens

THURSDAY, MAY 1

The big day! I'm up at 4:45 a.m. to fly from Minneapolis/St. Paul to Dallas to catch a connection to Mexico City! I find the trip heading south in more ways than one when I miss my connection. I catch a later flight, hoping the people set to meet me in Mexico will still be there. I don't want the problem of finding my way from the airport on my own, as the only Spanish I know is the Taco Bell menu. I doubt a cabbie will know where to go when I say "Burrito Supreme-o."

My fears are quickly pushed aside when I'm met at the airport by Jesus Holguin. It's Jesus who translates *Superman* comics into Spanish for Mexican publication. It's always weird seeing your stuff translated into a language you can't really read, and it's fun to meet a collaborator of sorts.

After a quick stop at the hotel, we head to the convention. I catch up with the other guests, like Walter and Louise Simonson (Weezie), Jon, Judy and Kal-El Bogdanove (Yes! Bog named his son after Superman's Kryptonian name!) and Denny O'Neil.

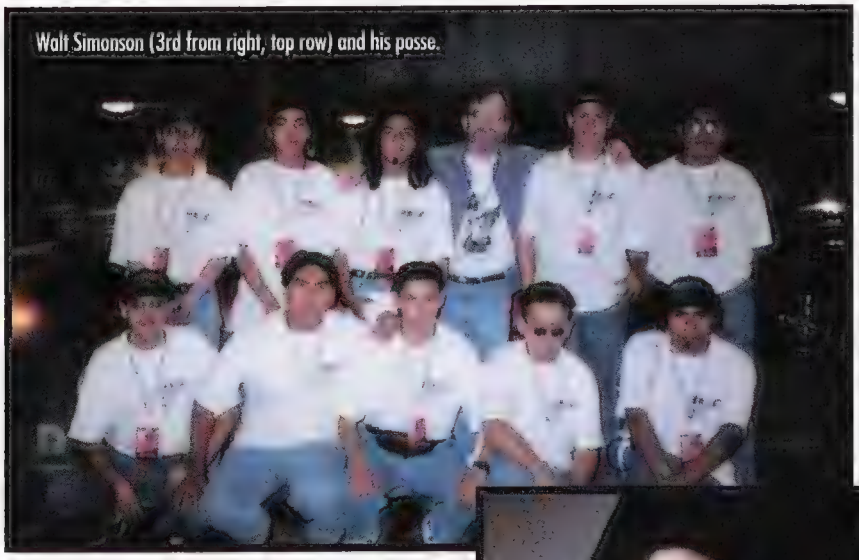
We spend the evening session signing autographs for fans. One big impression I'm left with is that the comics and paperbacks they give us to sign are, in many cases, beat and beat badly. They're wrinkled, torn and worn, which means they've been read and cherished, just like when I was a kid. It's great to see, because to me, that's what comics are all about.

Also, the fans are unbelievably polite. They stand in line for a couple hours waiting to get their stuff signed and even though we can give them only one autograph, they're incredibly understanding. They're a wonderful crowd.

The other guests and I retreat for a late evening meal—careful not to drink the water—and wonder at how big the show is. In one evening, I had already seen more fans than I usually do in an entire *weekend* at a typical American con.

FRIDAY, MAY 2

I get to the Con and meet our official host. He's Manelick de la Parra, head of Grupo Editorial Vid, the company that publishes *Superman*, *Batman*, *The Simpsons*, *Archie* and other titles for the Mexican market. He's a gracious, congenial fellow who treats us


Walt Simonson (3rd from right, top row) and his posse.

to lunch before we head back to work—no easy feat, considering the man cajoled us into eating worms as part of our official Mexican experience! Yeah, worms. They're considered a delicacy here, and they come fried in some weird concoction. You put them in a tortilla with guacamole and eat them. For the record, I used a LOT of guacamole.

More autograph signing. Then Bog, Walter, Weezie and I head for a panel titled, "The Future of Superman." In an enormous darkened room, we take the stage during a laser show complete with fog machines. Again, the crowd is enthusiastic and incredibly patient as our translator makes our rambling answers to their questions somewhat understandable. Translating for comic writers can be a tough job. We can really be windbags sometimes.

Humberto Ramos saved my rep by calling "Dial-for-Clothes."

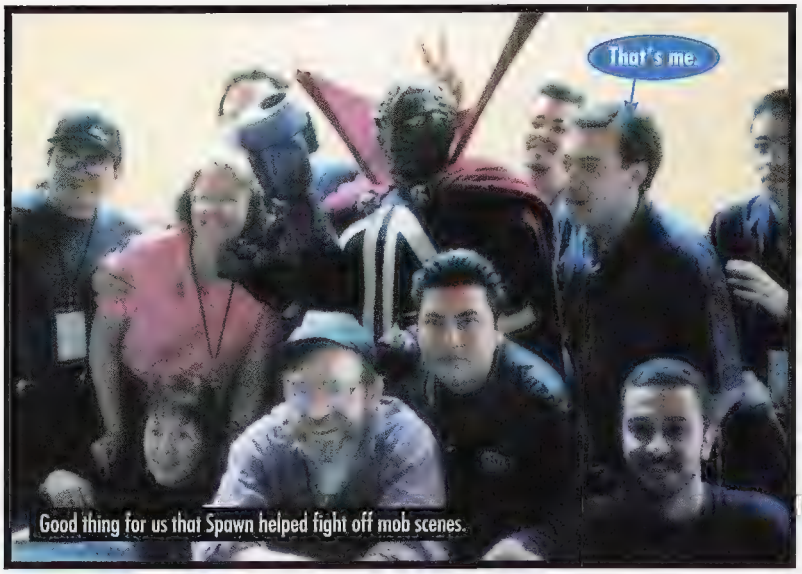
SATURDAY, MAY 3

We get up early to be at the convention to sign autographs for the volunteers and security guys. Keep in mind that with 20,000 people a day coming through the door, plenty of volunteers are needed! This is their only chance for signatures, because they're taking care of business the rest of the time.

Another observation: The best-selling comic in Mexico is *The Simpsons*, followed by *Superman* and *Batman*. Comic stores are in their infancy here, so about 80 percent of comics come by way of newsstands. Up until 1992, Mexican comics were digest-sized and printed on very cheap paper. But in 1993, the entire marketplace was transformed. The comics are now printed the same size as U.S. comics, and on better paper. The event that transformed the market? It was just a little storyline called "The Death Of Superman." And here no one even bothered to say "*gracias*."

After signing, we go to a panel with most all the guests. It's supposed to be a "meet everyone" panel, but turns instead into a surprise birthday party for Denny. He's presented with a three-foot diameter cake as a Mariachi band serenades him. The crowd roars in affection—especially when Denny follows the Mexican custom of burying his entire face in the cake!

We take in an afternoon of sightseeing with our local tour guides, artists Humberto Ramos, Roberto Flores and their wives. We get to see the National Palace, Zocalo Square and the Palace of Fine Arts. While we're out, a quick thunderstorm catches us by surprise so Walter, Weezie and I stop by Humberto's place for some dry clothes. That's a highlight too. It's always fun seeing an artist's workspace—it tells you a lot about him. Humberto keeps a very clean, organized space, and judging from the comics he has around, it looks like he's heavy into Joe Quesada and Jason Pearson's work these days.



Good thing for us that Spawn helped fight off mob scenes.

SUNDAY, MAY 4

More convention. More people. More enthusiasm. I have to leave by late afternoon and feel bad about doing so. Many conventions turn into disappointing affairs, but this one has exceeded all expectations. I can now say that I feel I have a lot of friends in Mexico. Now maybe I'll get some sleep on the plane. W

Dan Jurgens, writer of DC Comics' Superman *and* Teen Titans, *swears he only brought back $50 worth of goods from Mexico and none of it was contraband. Honest.*

FOR EXAMPLE,
BEHIND A TREE,
AND HIDE
FOR THE WOODS
LIKE HIGHTAIL IT
SWORD FIGHT,
REAL SAMURAI
YOU'D DO IN A
ALL THE THINGS
NOW YOU CAN DO

- REAL ENOUGH FOR YOU?
- NO LIFE BAR
- NO TIME LIMIT
- BLOODY DEATH BLOWS
- MASTER SWORDPLAY
- FORESTS, TEMPLES
- FIGHT IN RIVERS,

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"There is no storm such as this. It is a sickness in the sky. It is crafted in chaos, and even the darkness breathes."

—Orim, Journals of the Weatherlight... upon arrival in Rath

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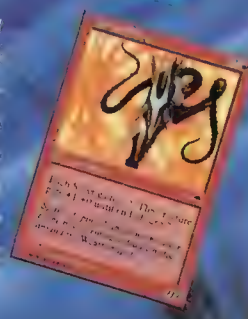

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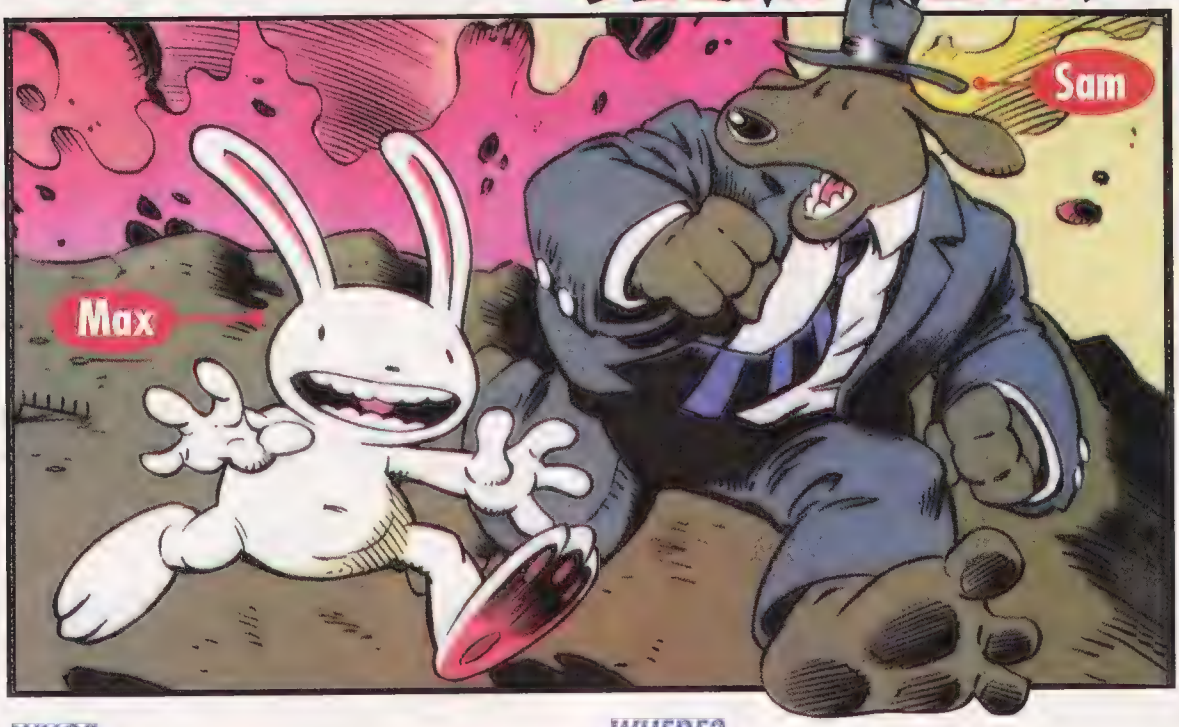
STRIP TEASE STARRING: SAM & MAX



WHO?

Sam and Max, freelance police.

WHAT?

"Sam is the 6-foot dog in the ill-fitting suit, and Max is the 3-foot rabbity thing," says Sam and Max's creator, writer/artist Steve Purcell. "They call themselves 'freelance police' because they figure that gives them license to do whatever they want to do."

They're right. During their violence-laden and in-fighting private eye misadventures over the years, Sam and Max have fought demons in a supermarket aisle, taken on self-combusting voodoo priests and eaten fried weasels on a stick.

"I think people like the fact that Sam and Max just fight crime because they think it's fun," says Purcell. "There's no overbearing sense of duty in them like with superheroes. I drop them into any situation on any page putting them in any conflict imaginable. As long as Sam and Max have plenty of excuses to blather with each other, it works for me."

WHERE?

With a mere *five* comics to their credit, these guys have developed their own bizarre cult following. The fun started in *Sam and Max*, a one-shot from Fishwrap Productions in 1987, and from there moved to *Sam and Max on the Road*, a one-shot from Comico in '88. That was followed by *Bad Day on the Moon*, a 1992 Epic Comics release. The *Sam and Max Special Edition* reprint volume came soon after. And finally, *Sam and Max Surfin' the Highway* is a massive trade paperback reprint volume from Marlowe and Company (still in print) which adds in a bevy of two-page strips originally found in LucasArts' newsletter *The Adventurer*—not to mention 1994's hysterical LucasArts video game *Sam and Max Hit the Road*.

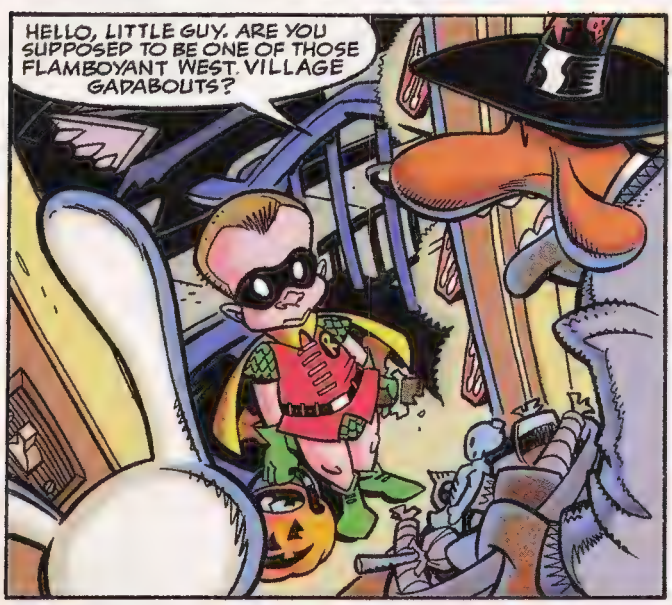
WHAT'S NEXT?

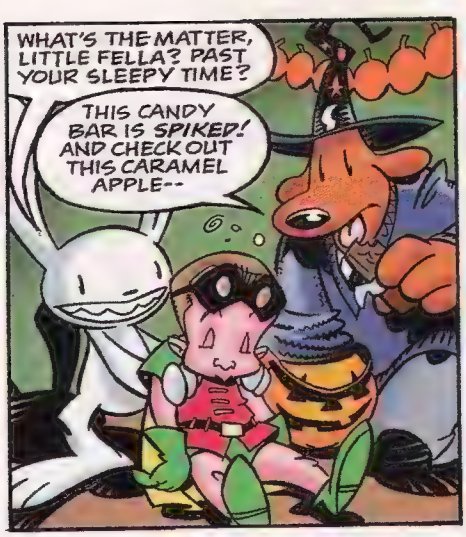
Sam and Max are about to become more exposed than ever before. (Which is pretty hard, considering Max runs around buck nekkid!) That's because the Fox network is slated to air at least 13 episodes of a "Sam and Max" Saturday morning cartoon this fall. But for the moment, you can feed your funny bone with the following three-page Sam and Max special Halloween bonanza.

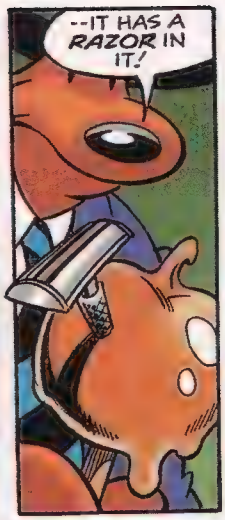
SAM & MAX FREELANCE POLICE IN: "BELLY OF THE BEAST"

~BASED ON ANXIOUS CLUCKINGS OF JITTERY MOMS~

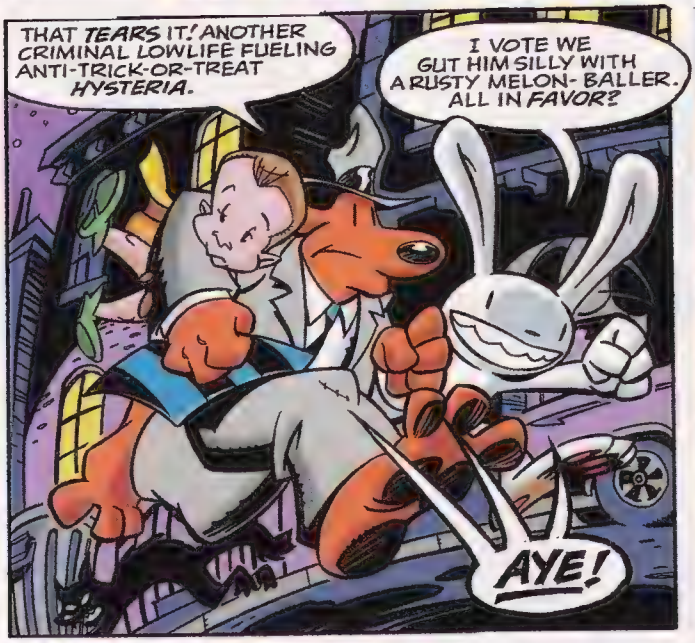
TM & © 1997 by STEVE PURCELL.
LETTERED BY LOIS BUHALIS.
Digital coloring by Twilight Graphics




WHAT'S THE MATTER, LITTLE FELLA? PAST YOUR SLEEPY TIME?
THIS CANDY BAR IS SPIKED! AND CHECK OUT THIS CARAMEL APPLE--


--IT HAS A RAZOR IN IT!

WHO GAVE YOU THESE SO-CALLED TREATS?
MISTER AHTOO, DOWN THE BLOCK. HE AST ME TO COME IN, BUT I WAS A-SCEARED.

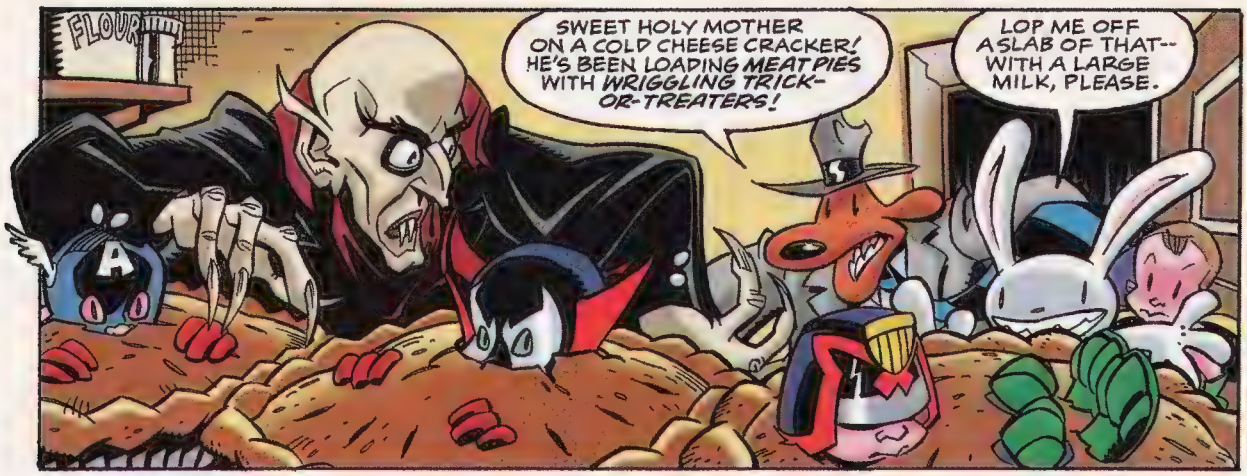

THAT TEARS IT! ANOTHER CRIMINAL LOWLIFE FUELING ANTI-TRICK-OR-TREAT HYSTERIA.
I VOTE WE GUT HIM SILLY WITH A RUSTY MELON-BALLER. ALL IN FAVOR?
AYE!

NICE OF THE OLD GENT TO DECK THE HOUSE OUT FOR THE OCCASION.
IT'S LIKE FLY PAPER TO THE LITTLE WAIFS.

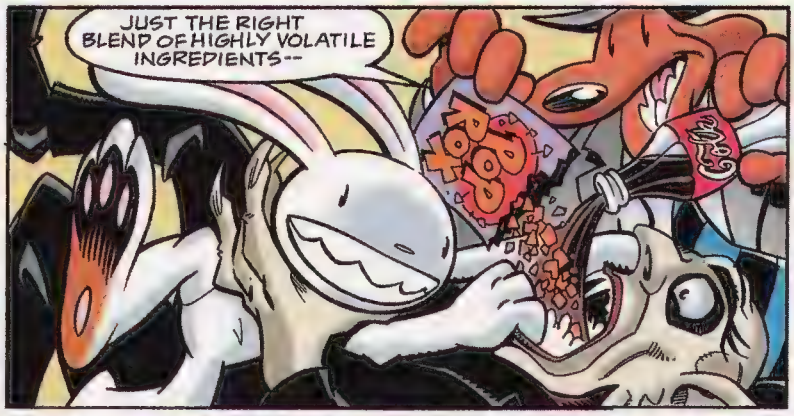
BAM BAM BAM

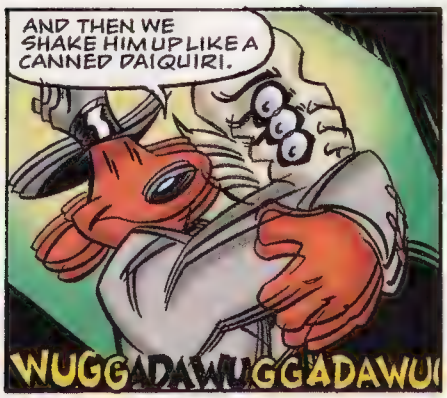
YESSSS?

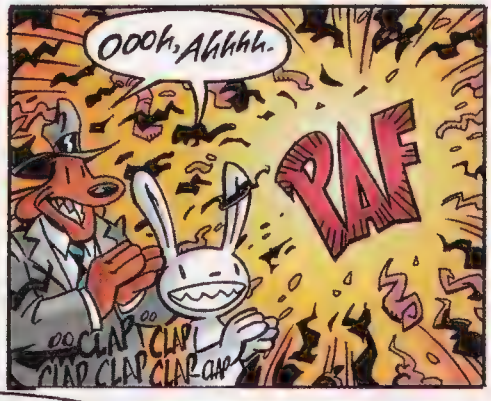
BOOMK

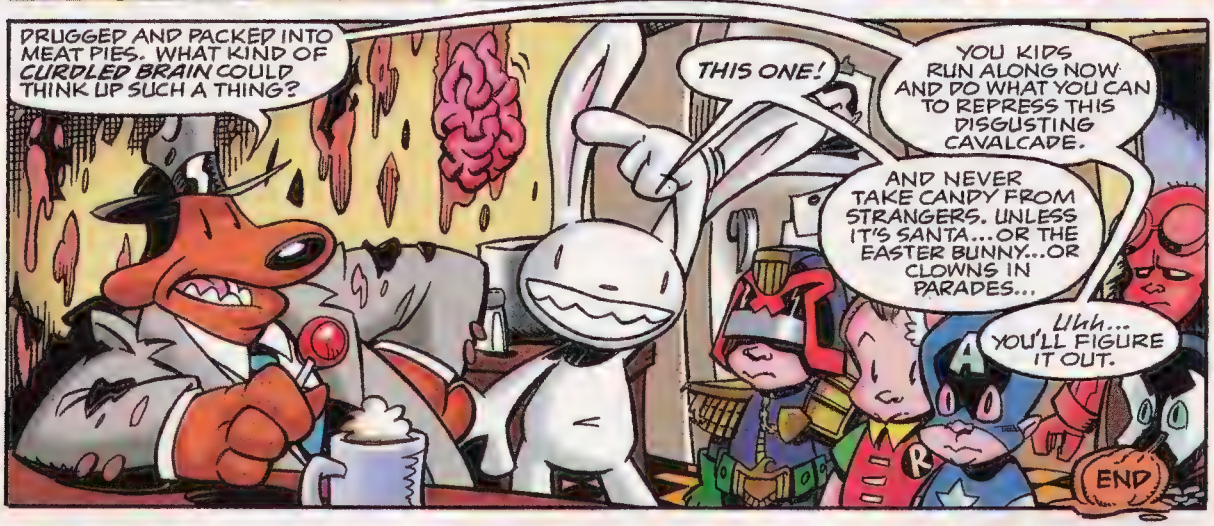

FLOUR
SWEET HOLY MOTHER ON A COLD CHEESE CRACKER! HE'S BEEN LOADING MEAT PIES WITH WRIGGLING TRICK-OR-TREATERS!
LOP ME OFF A SLAB OF THAT-- WITH A LARGE MILK, PLEASE.

HOLD HIM, MAX! I'VE GOT A PLAN!


JUST THE RIGHT BLEND OF HIGHLY VOLATILE INGREDIENTS--


AND THEN WE SHAKE HIM UP LIKE A CANNED DAIQUIRI.
WUGGADAWUGGADAWU


OOOh, AHHHh.
PAF
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP


DRUGGED AND PACKED INTO MEAT PIES. WHAT KIND OF CURDLED BRAIN COULD THINK UP SUCH A THING?
THIS ONE!
YOU KIDS RUN ALONG NOW AND DO WHAT YOU CAN TO REPRESS THIS DISGUSTING CAVALCADE.
AND NEVER TAKE CANDY FROM STRANGERS. UNLESS IT'S SANTA...OR THE EASTER BUNNY...OR CLOWNS IN PARADES...
Uhh... YOU'LL FIGURE IT OUT.
END

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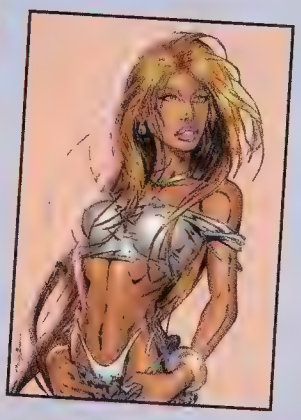

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Signed by Tony Daniel

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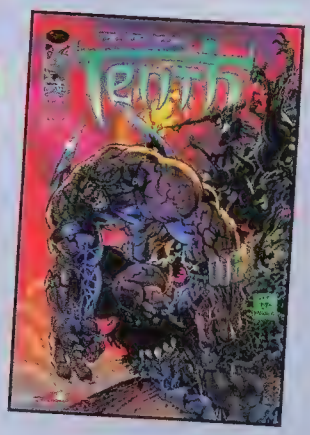

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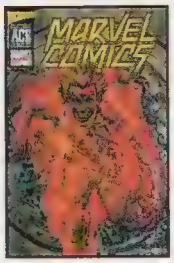

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This very rare Wizard Ace is signed by cover artist Glenn Fabry!

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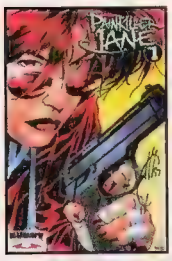

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'Wizard' pits the current JLA against its Silver Age counterpart

BAR NONE, THE JLA IS COMICS' TOUGHEST SUPER-TEAM.

If Superman doesn't pummel you, Batman will outthink you. If Wonder Woman doesn't swat you, Flash'll run you down. Nobody can beat DC Comics' team supreme, right? Wellllll, maybe not anyone in this era. In fact, the only folks who would stand a chance are... the JLA members themselves.

Sort of.

Since there've been so many incarnations of the JLA, we figgered we'd pit the two best JLA assemblages of all-time: the current powerhouse roster against its Silver Age 1960s counterpart. Just think: Could the Silver Age Green Lantern (Hal Jordan) take out the new GL (Kyle Rayner)? Can the Superman that existed before his 1986 revamp whip the Kryptonite outta today's Man of Steel? Would Barry Allen run Wally West ragged?

So we thought about it. We even had current JLA writer Grant Morrison think about it. And here's what we came up with.

By the Wizard Staff

A LEAGUE

SUPERMAN Pre-Crisis on Infinite Earths vs. Modern

PRE-CRISIS SUPERMAN'S DEAL: Powered by solar energy, this guy was so strong he could knock planets outta orbit. Could fly so fast, he'd break the time barrier. Toss in invulnerability, heat and X-ray vision. His weaknesses were Kryptonite and magic. He existed from 1938 to 1986, when he was wiped out of continuity by DC, revamped from scratch and de-powered.

MODERN SUPERMAN'S DEAL: Powered by solar energy, the current Man of Steel has super-strength, invulnerability, heat and X-ray vision, super-speed and flight. He'd break a sweat lifting a mountain. His weaknesses are Kryptonite and magic.

GRANT MORRISON'S TAKE: "No contest," Morrison says. "The Pre-Crisis Superman could kick the current version across the galaxy. The Pre-Crisis Superman could throw planets around and move suns. The current one seems to be losing his powers all the time and gets hurt too easily. It's not that the Pre-Crisis version was any better than the current version, he was just way more powerful, and he would win, hands down."

WIZARD'S TAKE: Don't bother with the popcorn—this really wouldn't last long. While the present-day Superman is one of the most powerful beings in the DCU, he can't hold a candle to the original Supes—either in the power department or, more importantly, in experience. That version was Superman for a lot longer than the new guy (remember, the Pre-Crisis version was Superboy while growing up, whereas the modern Superman assumed his identity after college).

While the new Supes might land a handful of punches (the old Supes being so trusting and all), all they'd really do is get the older "S" P.O.ed, and a flurry of Flash-speed punches K.O.s the "new" guy before he even has a chance to say, "John Byrne did WHAT?"

THE WINNER: The Pre-Crisis Superman

WONDER WOMAN Pre-Crisis vs. Modern

PRE-CRISIS WONDER WOMAN'S DEAL: Incredibly strong and swift, the Wonder Woman of old was a master fighter with Amazon training. Her magic bracelets could repel bullets, and she had a magic lasso that could force anyone to do her will. In order to fly, she had a magical invisible plane. She would lose her Amazon strength if her bracelets were chained together by a man (as long as she remained chained). She existed from 1941 to 1986 when she was wiped out of continuity and revamped in 1987...and powered *up*.

MODERN WONDER WOMAN'S DEAL: Possessing super-strength and the ability to fly, the modern WW has been trained for hand-to-hand combat. She has bracelets that can repel bullets, and has a magic lasso that can force anyone to do her will. Her powers were recently amplified when she became an immortal goddess.

GRANT MORRISON'S TAKE: "That's another interesting one," Morrison admits. "I think the current one might edge out the older one, and win it. She can fly after all, whereas the older version couldn't. Also, the old Wonder Woman wasn't anything near as strong as she is now. As people have often said, Diana used to be the League's secretary and take the minutes of the meeting, but now she gets involved. She could probably even lead the team pretty well if she had to. The old typist wouldn't stand a chance against the warrior that she is today."

WIZARD'S TAKE: No contest. One super-speed, Superman-level punch through the Invisible Jet has the old WW plummeting helplessly to the ground, all the while being battered by a blur of fists and kicks. Before the older one even hits the ground, she's bound by two invisible lassos, and carted off by the current Amazon Princess.

THE WINNER: Modern Wonder Woman

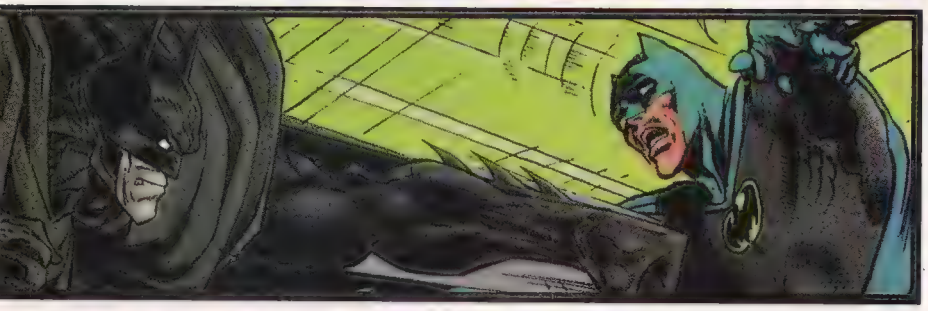
FITS OWN

BATMAN Silver Age vs. Modern

SILVER AGE BATMAN'S DEAL: Millionaire industrialist Bruce Wayne has honed his body and mind to perfection, utilizing the best of modern technology to fight crime as Batman.

MODERN BATMAN'S DEAL: Same deal.

GRANT MORRISON'S TAKE: "The modern Batman would win it just because he's been built up to be so invincible," Morrison says. "The new guy would have to win since he's trained himself to be the absolute best in the world at everything from fighting to detection."



WIZARD'S TAKE: There's good...and there's *better*. Having a couple more years of fighting experience and know-how behind him, the modern Batman would make short work of his more mistake-prone, impulsive self of yesteryear. Just when the old Batman would be staking out the battlefield, he wouldn't realize *he's* being staked out by new Batman. A quick drop-kick to the head later, and the new Dark Knight drags the old Dark Knight off the battlefield.

THE WINNER: Modern Batman

JLA's New Plan

JLA may be DC Comics' best-selling title, but the publisher has discovered it is missing a vital ingredient—more women.

"We're doing a whole new plan that we came up with recently," says *JLA* writer Grant Morrison, who originally intended Wonder Woman to be the team's only female member. "We sat down and thought about the fact that people want women on the team, and how that hasn't worked, since the women in the DC Universe just aren't strong enough."

Remaining mum about the final roster, which debuts in *JLA* #16, Morrison explains how he came up with the revised membership. "The basic structure was to map the 12 Greek gods on the heroes of the DC Universe. Once you start looking at the women that you can use in this mythological context, though, they become much more powerful and interesting. This new team is so mythical and amazing...it's incredible. This is the Justice League that has done it for me again, this is the one that's pumped the volume up to 11 again."

Morrison also reveals he'll be introducing new villains during his second year on the book, starting off with Prometheus, someone Morrison describes as the anti-Batman. "He's going to be the first new villain of the second year. Basically, he's the Batman of evil. He's someone who's sat down and methodically taught himself to be the best at everything, and now he's ready to take on the Justice League. The first member he beats is Batman, which really shakes up the rest of the team."

And after that? Things are still a little nebulous, but Morrison definitely has ideas. "I want to do something with Mr. Mxyzptlk," Morrison says. "I figured that the scariest thing I could do would be an invasion from the fifth dimension, and actually treat these guys as a real threat. How could you possibly defend against an invasion from guys who comprehend two more dimensions than we do? I'd love to have the JLA take the war back into the fifth dimension, and see their perceptions of Mxyzptlk's home." ■ *Matthew Brady*

GREEN LANTERN Silver Age vs. Modern

SILVER AGE GREEN LANTERN'S DEAL: Fearless test pilot Hal Jordan was known as the "greatest" of all the Green Lantern Corps (an intergalactic police force). His power ring had to be charged every 24 hours and its weakness was the color yellow. Its power was limited only to his strong willpower. He sacrificed his life to save the Earth in last year's *Final Night* #4.

MODERN GREEN LANTERN'S DEAL: Though he is the sole GL, artist Kyle Rayner is still getting used to being Green Lantern. His power ring must be recharged after extensive use and it has no known weaknesses; its power is limited only to his willpower.

GRANT MORRISON'S TAKE: "That's a hard one," Morrison admits. "Hal might win due to his experience, but Kyle is better at using the ring. So, in terms of imagination, Kyle's got it cold. Kyle would be making huge Japanese robot death traps with his ring while Hal would be making a really big hammer. But Hal was a pretty good fighter. A battle between the two of them would be too close to call."

WIZARD'S TAKE: Too close to call? No way. Even though Hal had more limitations to his ring, he was absolutely fearless when it came to heroics—simply because of his background as a test pilot (which takes a lotta guts). Kyle, though far more imaginative in his use of the power ring, is still learning the ropes and is unsure of himself in battle. Kyle would probably strike first using a ring-generated manga-esque battle cannon, but Hal—through sheer willpower—would overtake him with a giant green fist.

THE WINNER: Silver Age Green Lantern

AQUAMAN Silver Age vs. Modern

SILVER AGE AQUAMAN'S DEAL: King of the underwater kingdom of Atlantis, Arthur Curry was a hotheaded monarch. He could breathe underwater, endure great pressures and speak to all sea animals. He had a beautiful wife and son.

MODERN AQUAMAN'S DEAL: King of the underwater kingdom of Atlantis, Arthur Curry is still a hotheaded monarch. He can breathe underwater, endure great pressures and control all sea animals with overpowering mental energy. His wife has left him, his son is dead and his left hand has been severed and replaced by a cybernetic harpoon. Talk about bad luck.

GRANT MORRISON'S TAKE: "The new guy would have to win," Morrison says. "The current guy would just harpoon his younger self one when he wasn't looking. Young Aquaman would be trying to call in small fish to swim around and confuse the new guy, and electric eels to electrocute him, but meanwhile, the new one would be cutting his head off with his hand and stringing his guts up in the Aquacave or wherever."

WIZARD'S TAKE: Sea World would give a better show. The younger, more jumpy Artie'd make the first move, probably going for the "weaker" left side of the older Artie, due to his harpoon hand. What the rookie doesn't anticipate is that the harpoon is cybernetically controlled, detaches itself and its cord is quickly wrapped around him. Struggling, young Artie pleads to his whale friends to help him outta this jam—until older Art gets right up to his face, "cancels" that cry for help with his own mental blast, then K.O.s his younger self with a blast of his souped-up mental powers. Then he swims away, complaining.

THE WINNER: Modern Aquaman

FLASH Silver Age vs. Modern

SILVER AGE FLASH'S DEAL: Though unbeknownst to him, police scientist Barry Allen used an energy field called the "Speed Force" to run at light-speed. He could vibrate his atoms at such a speed that he could move through solid objects, and had an aura around him when he ran to protect him from friction and other obstacles. He died in *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #8 (1985) saving the universe from destruction.

MODERN FLASH'S DEAL: Wally West is the former speedster Kid Flash, the youthful sidekick of the Silver Age Flash. He uses an energy field called the "Speed Force," allowing him to run at light speed and beyond. He can make solid objects explode by vibrating through them and has an aura around him when he runs to protect him from friction and other obstacles.

GRANT MORRISON'S TAKE: "Wally would win—he's faster than Barry," Morrison says. "Wally's simply got the experience edge on Barry, because he's been doing this whole hero thing since he was a kid. Even though Barry was the scientist and did know how to push the theoretical boundaries, he could only run as fast as light if he really pushed himself. Wally's faster than Barry could've hoped to have been, and could hit him a thousand times before Barry had his costume on. Wally would have to win."

WIZARD'S TAKE: Imagine this: You're all doped up and trying to land a punch on someone—that's what Barry would be up against. Suspending the fact that Wally would never fight Barry, Wally is ultimately faster—and smarter. Though Barry understood the mechanics of super-speed, Wally *grew up* with super-speed, and also has a working knowledge of the Speed Force, whereas Barry did not. Plus, Wally physically channels Speed Force energy, allowing him to give and take away a person's super-speed—leaving Barry sucking wind. Because Wally would hate himself the whole while (and forever after) for doing battle with his mentor and father figure, indecision would momentarily paralyze him, letting Barry tag him a few times. But Wally would quickly kick it into gear and take Barry down.

THE WINNER: Modern Flash

GREEN ARROW Silver Age vs. Modern

SILVER AGE GREEN ARROW'S DEAL: An expert marksman, Oliver Queen was also an excellent hand-to-hand combatant. In his early days, he used specially designed arrows that would explode or use knock-out gas, among others. He died in an explosion in *Green Arrow* #101 (1995).

MODERN GREEN ARROW'S DEAL: The son of Oliver Queen, Connor Hawke is also an expert marksman and martial arts combatant. His arsenal is limited only to normal arrows.

GRANT MORRISON'S TAKE: "Ollie would win, because he's less uptight," Morrison says. "Connor's good, but he's too tightly wound. That's the edge that would make Ollie better, the fact that he's looser with the bow. Ollie was so good he could use boxing glove arrows and handcuff arrows and still be a threat. Connor still has to use bladed arrows because that's what he's good at. Again, it's his imagination and wit that would save the day for Ollie."

WIZARD'S TAKE: Like father like son? Though Connor's a better fighter, Ollie's got the edge on marksmanship and attitude. After all, the hotheaded Ollie became a marksman to survive on a desert island, and it's that type of edge that'd put him over the top against his more pacifistic son. One well-placed stun-arrow, followed by a net-arrow, and Junior'd be put outta commission. Buuut...if Connor and Ollie were to ever mix it up hand-to-hand, we'd tip the hat to Connor. But hey, since Ollie'd never let him get that close, it's not a problem.

THE WINNER: Silver Age Green Arrow

MARTIAN MANHUNTER Silver Age vs. Modern

SILVER AGE MARTIAN MANHUNTER'S DEAL: Hailing from his home planet of Mars, J'onn J'onzz has a vast range of powers including super-strength, super-speed, telepathy, invisibility, shape-shifting, and super-vision.

MODERN MARTIAN MANHUNTER'S DEAL: Same deal.

GRANT MORRISON'S TAKE: "They seem to be pretty much the same, except that I think I'm giving the current J'onn more powers than the older version," Morrison says. "I'm also making him more sophisticated and adept at what he can do with what he's got. The interesting thing with him is that you can keep giving him new powers and tell people that he just hasn't bothered to reveal them yet. I see him as the most powerful Justice League member of all, but no one knows it, and no one will ever know."

WIZARD'S TAKE: Mars attacks! Not only does today's Manhunter have more experience, he's also seen a lotta pain and death since his arrival on Earth—giving him the ultimate edge in combat. A quick mindwipe, and the current Manhunter would send his young self packing to another planet.

THE WINNER: Modern Martian Manhunter

And the win-nah is:

THE MODERN JLA!

But not by much, with a score of 5-3. And we know of an authority who would have to agree with the outcome: "I know a lot of people will hate me for saying this," states Morrison, "but I think the new guys are better."

The Wizard staff, without a doubt, could kick the Hero Illustrated staff's butts any day of the week. There. We said it. (Additional reporting by Matthew Brady.)

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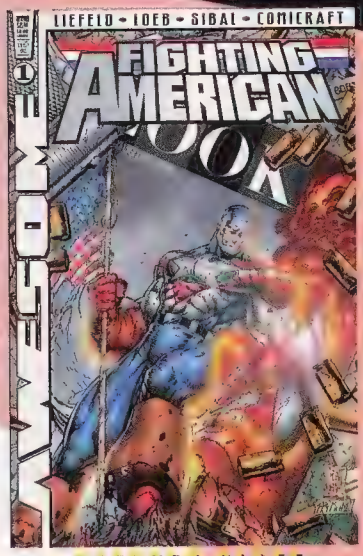

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a wonderful LIFE

Just months out of college, Marvel golden boy Joe Kelly shoots to the top as new 'X-Men' writer

Sitting on the front porch of his Long Island, N.Y., home on a stiflingly hot July afternoon, Joe Kelly is trying to remember what it was like when his life wasn't so crazy.

Decked out in shorts and a T-shirt—his attention never far from that really inviting swimming pool in the back yard—he ticks off the things on his to-do list. He's writing Marvel Comics' wildly popular *Deadpool* monthly series, is successfully following Karl Kesel's acclaimed writing stint on *Daredevil* and was just handed half of the X-Men franchise with the *X-Men* writing assignment starting in October. And, oh yeah, he's getting married in five days.

"To even think about how I got all this is kind of insane. It's like somebody waved a magic wand and I got really lucky," says Kelly, smiling so big you'd swear it hurts. "I'm completely excited about it, it's great, it's the best thing that's happened."

It's hard enough to believe that only a year ago, the 26-year-old felt lucky to be doing an occasional fill-in issue for Marvel while in his senior year at New York University.

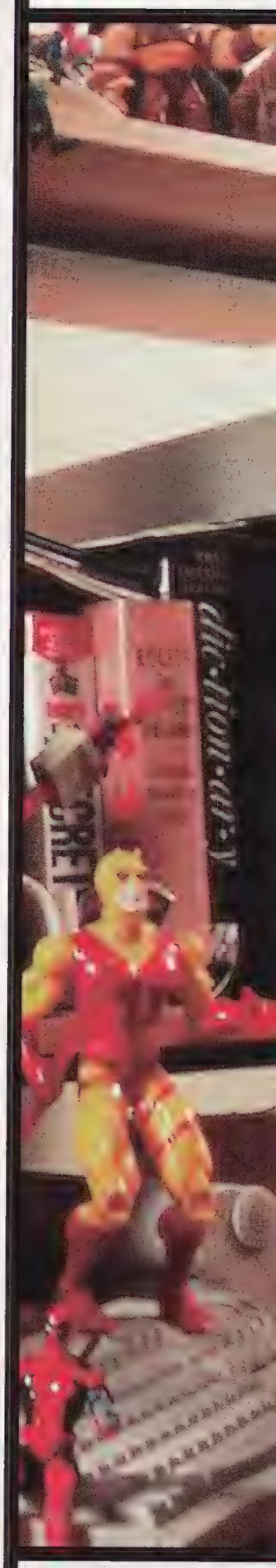
A lifelong comics fan with a penchant for horror titles ("I had all these books from the 1960s with scantily-clad demon chicks, go-go demons, I loved all that," he says with a you-know-what-I'm-talking-about kind of grin), Joe enrolled in the NYU screenwriting program with the hopes of breaking into film. Then one fateful day…

"There was a letter sitting on the program director's desk with Spider-Man on it. I said, 'Oh, I guess I should snoop and see what that's about.'" The letter was from Marvel Comics, trying to set up a workshop at NYU because they were looking for new writers. The next day, Joe volunteered to oversee the workshop, provided he got to participate. "That's how I weaseled my way in and started showing Marvel my work. It's just so strange the way things work out. If I hadn't been in that office, I wouldn't have seen that letter, and I'm sure it would have been thrown in the garbage."

Kelly's cinematic scripting style caught Marvel editor James Felder's attention, and soon Felder called with the first job offer. Kelly wound up scripting several stories over the next year for books like *Marvel Fanfare* and *What If?* Soon thereafter, Matt Idelson,

by scott brick

PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI



Like in his work, Joe Kelly shows many faces, which range from the silly to the serious.

KELLY'S HEROES

Wanna know what new *X-Men* writer Joe Kelly thinks of each X-Men character? *Wizard* decided to ask him for his take on the following heroes.

CYCLOPS

He's always been the big boy scout and believes in Xavier's dream. But he has a lot of insecurity about leading and does a really good job in hiding it.

WOLVERINE

He's still a loose cannon after all these years. He does things his own way, regardless of whether the powers that be will like it. We're going to see him stay pretty hardcore and less like a grandfather.

GAMBIT

He'll be gone for a while. He'll have a huge stain on his record [after *Uncanny X-Men* #350] and it's not going to be easy to get back with the family. He is the black sheep again and he won't reconcile anytime soon.

another Marvel editor, called and asked Kelly to submit a proposal for a new monthly Deadpool series.

Wait a minute! Joe Kelly, a virtual unknown, on *Deadpool*, which stars the popular mercenary who'd had two successful mini-series devoted to him? Kelly's the first to admit he wasn't most people's first choice to write the monthly series, even his own. "It was just an example of Matt having faith, and I know he was getting a hard time. 'How can you launch a series with this guy? Nobody knows him.' I knew that, I expected that and I felt the same way. But it worked out great. It took James and Matt's faith to pull me through. Everything that has worked out for me, those guys hooking me up has been the best."

Fast forward a bit. Within months of Kelly's debut on *Deadpool*, Kesel decides to leave after a very successful run on *Daredevil*. Felder, then editor on *DD*, comes knocking on Kelly's door. "We've got this think-tank, the Creative Differences guys," he says, taking a long pull from his ice water, rolling the glass across his forehead. "It's me, [writer] Ben Raab, James and Matt, and we always bounce ideas off one another on any book we're working on. We show each other things, we pow-wow on proposals. I had talked to James plenty about Daredevil just in general, about what I liked and what I didn't, so we had a foundation for me coming on the book."

Suddenly Kelly's scripting two monthly titles, and he hadn't even graduated yet! Figuring he had more good fortune than he could reasonably expect, Kelly was completely unprepared for Marvel's next offer.

It seems writer Scott Lobdell had chosen to move on after several years writing both X-Men books. In the search for a successor on *X-Men*, Kelly's name came up. "It's a big mystery to me, in complete honesty. It's weird." He shakes his head like he still doesn't believe it happened, like he wants to hurry up and start the book before they change their minds.

"There was an X-conference that I was invited to. They wanted some new blood around to bounce around ideas, and I just figured I'd take it as an opportunity to talk a lot. So I piped in a lot, and I guess it was a confidence builder for them."

Then came The Call. "Bob Harras called me up and said, 'Come and see me when you get in.' I said, 'Oh, okay.' I hung up the phone and had no idea what was going to happen. I was crapping my pants, thinking this is where I get fired! Then he called right back, saying 'Mark Powers is here and he said that was really evil of me to not tell you what this was about.' So I went in there, and we talked about the X-Men."

Ah, *X-Men*. The comic book Promised Land. Most pros dream about working on *X-Men* one day. Kelly's no exception, only his dreams came about because of the X-Men. "I have really bad sleep problems, had 'em all my life. As a kid, to help myself fall asleep, I would make up an ongoing *X-Men* story. Of course, in those stories I was one of the characters, but this job definitely harkens back to that."

So begins the Joe Kelly era of comics. Beginning with issue #70, Kelly and penciler Carlos Pacheco will helm *X-Men*, while Steve Seagle and Chris Bachalo take over *Uncanny X-Men*. And what, specifically, will be going on in the pages of his newest book? "I don't know," says Kelly, and he means it. Remember, he is getting married in five days, and has a few other things on his mind.

He shifts his chair out of the blazing sunlight inching over the porch and cocks his head, contemplating the things he does know. "I know the broad strokes. We've done some talking about story ideas and some short-term stuff, but we haven't really talked yet because things have been so crazy. I have to give them an outline before the wedding."

Certain major changes have been set up. When the X-folks come back from the recent "Zero Tolerance" storyline, it'll be to a new status quo, a scenario Kelly is eager to script. "When the X-Men return to the mansion, it's completely gutted. They don't have any personal effects, they don't have the Danger Room, they don't have the Blackbird, they don't have anything—which I think is really important, because I think they became too powerful. That's something we [at Marvel] had all talked about. It's tough to see them as the underdog when they can get anywhere instantly, they heal with Shi'ar technology, they're invincible, essentially, so it's a little tougher to buy that it's them against the world."

FANTASTIC FOUR #1
THE HEROES RETURN IN THE DAWN OF A NEW AGE
SCOTT LOBDELL
MARVEL COMICS
ALAN DAVIS
THIS NOVEMBER
WWW.MARVELONLINE.COM OR AOL AT KEYWORD: MARVEL
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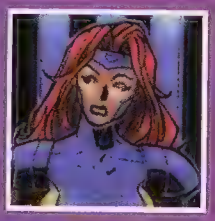
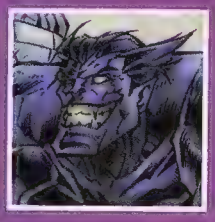
ROGUE

She'll be a wild card again. She's let herself be defined by her relationships. She's going to take a lot more control over herself, and whether it's for the better, remains to be seen.



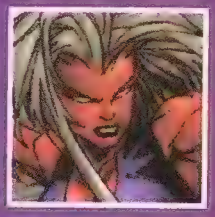
JEAN GREY

She's always been the mother of the group. She'll start to go through a rebirth of some sort. Not literally, but she'll push herself a little harder and get a little more edgier.



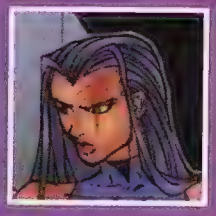
BEAST

He's your fun-loving super-genius.



STORM

She was a dirty street thief and a goddess in her lifetime. She's always both of those things. Like her namesake, she'll be as unpredictable as the weather.



PSYLOCKE

She's tough to get a handle on because of all her recent changes. But she's still a thrillseeker, even though it's bitten her in the butt.

More changes will soon follow. "First of all, Scott and Jean are taking off temporarily, because that just yanks the spine out of the team. Functionally, it's to remove the parents from the book, so you're left with just the psycho kids and their crazy drunk friends. When they do come back, it'll be very important to the book."

Next, Marrow will take over as the new resident wild card. "I love Marrow, because she's so damn evil. The first thing she does is take over the basement. She scrawls warnings all over the doors and basically hangs out down there." Despite being fixated on Angel ("She sees him as Jesus Christ, because she saw him killed in the Morlock tunnel, then saw him come back"), Marrow will nonetheless hook up with Cannonball. "They're going to get involved, I know that, because when this white-bread guy gets involved with Marrow, that's just cool, but it's also going to be horrible and painful."

Later, Xavier's absence will turn into a quest scenario. "He gets lost in the system and nobody knows where he is. I want to do a scene where Senator Kelly goes to open the vault and let him out as a show of good will, and Xavier's just not there. You see? I'm more interested in the character stuff than the spaceships."

Despite the pressures of plotting his new book before he leaves on his honeymoon, Kelly hasn't lost any enthusiasm for his other monthly duties. As animated as he was talking about the X-Men, his face really lights up at the mention of his breakthrough book. "I love talking about *Deadpool*, it's like my baby. We had this great thing, we were going to tie it into the 'Heroes Return' stuff. You know how the whole ['Heroes Reborn'] Universe is in that blue ball that Franklin Richards has? Well, we were going to do this thing where Deadpool gets sent on a series of missions, each of which get pieces of what happened to the heroes. Now, we knew this probably wasn't going to fly, because who am I? I'm like this chump, trying to pitch a new series, and I'm going to try to tell you how to bring the heroes back? But it ended up that, in the end, he had to steal the blue ball from Franklin. It was like Deadpool running around with the heroes

Kelly has built his rep around the sense of humor in his work, best seen in *Deadpool*.

CAPTAIN AMERICA #1
THE HEROES RETURN IN THE DAWN OF A NEW AGE
MARK WAID
MARVEL COMICS
RON GARNEY
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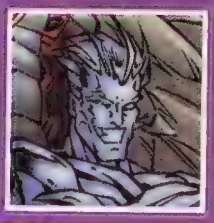
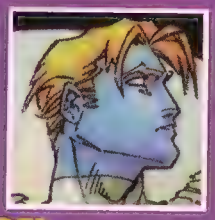


ICEMAN

He's looking to find his way on the team. He's a prankster and he's trying hard to figure out where he fits, whether it be the punky little kid or in a more responsible position.



ANGEL

He's actually pretty shallow. He's had a life of luxury and prestige while other mutants hide and scurry. He's enchanting and angelic, but not as deep as he thinks he is.

MARROW

She's evil incarnate and a savage loose cannon. She's had a life of nothing but hardship, like a wartime refugee. She's not the type to lighten up.

MAGGOTT

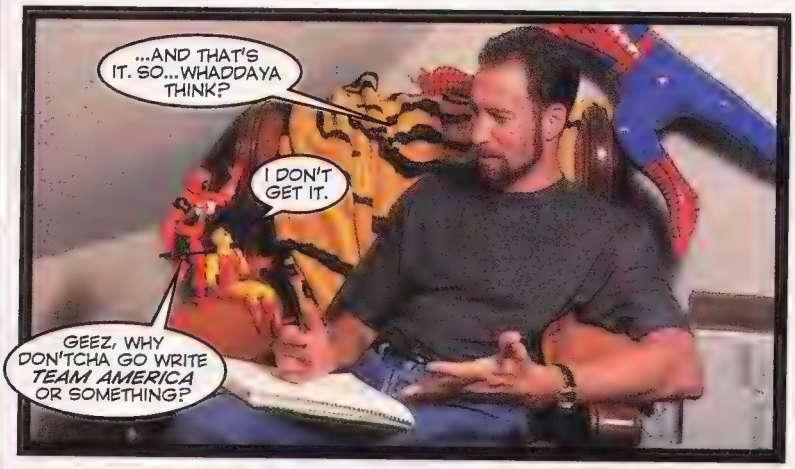
He's a braggart and show-off because he's hiding something. He's too cool for school. He's outspoken and is always hitting on women.

DR. REYES

She's a self-loathing mutant to the point where she's a little prejudiced about them. She only wants to be human. She's going to maintain her regular life. She'll be the human voice of the team. *Matthew Senreich*

under his arm for a couple of issues. What an utter nightmare that would be! I was so jazzed on that plan, and it got shot down instantly. But I still think that would have been so cool, it would have been just great."

Similarly, Kelly is excited about *Daredevil*'s future. "The tone is always going to be that up and down roller-coaster ride. Lots of action, lots of soap opera stuff, Foggy's going to have a lot of girl problems, that kind of thing. We're playing with a lot of different types of villains.



One day I'd love to bring Stilt-Man in, I just wanna see Stilt-Man! I think it'll be fun. This big, bad guy shows up and becomes kind of Kingpin-esque, building up toward issue #400. But there was no way I was going to use the Kingpin. Especially as a new writer, I can't bring the big guns out. If I haven't earned it, I don't feel like I could do it."

So how tough is it to be Marvel's new No. 1 guy, taking over big-time projects from big name talents? "There's plenty of pressure to maintain, or transcend. When you know you're following up big guys, it's definitely intimidating. It's staggering and it's terrifying, and I lose a lot of sleep. I've had more than my share of X-Men anxiety dreams lately, worrying about all that. But it's a good kind of pressure I'm under. It's not like somebody dumped a job in my lap and I'm terrified that I'm gonna get fired. It's more like they've set the bar and I just have to keep leaping higher. I want to live up to the expectations and I want to surpass it. I'm scared in a good way, that's what it boils down to."

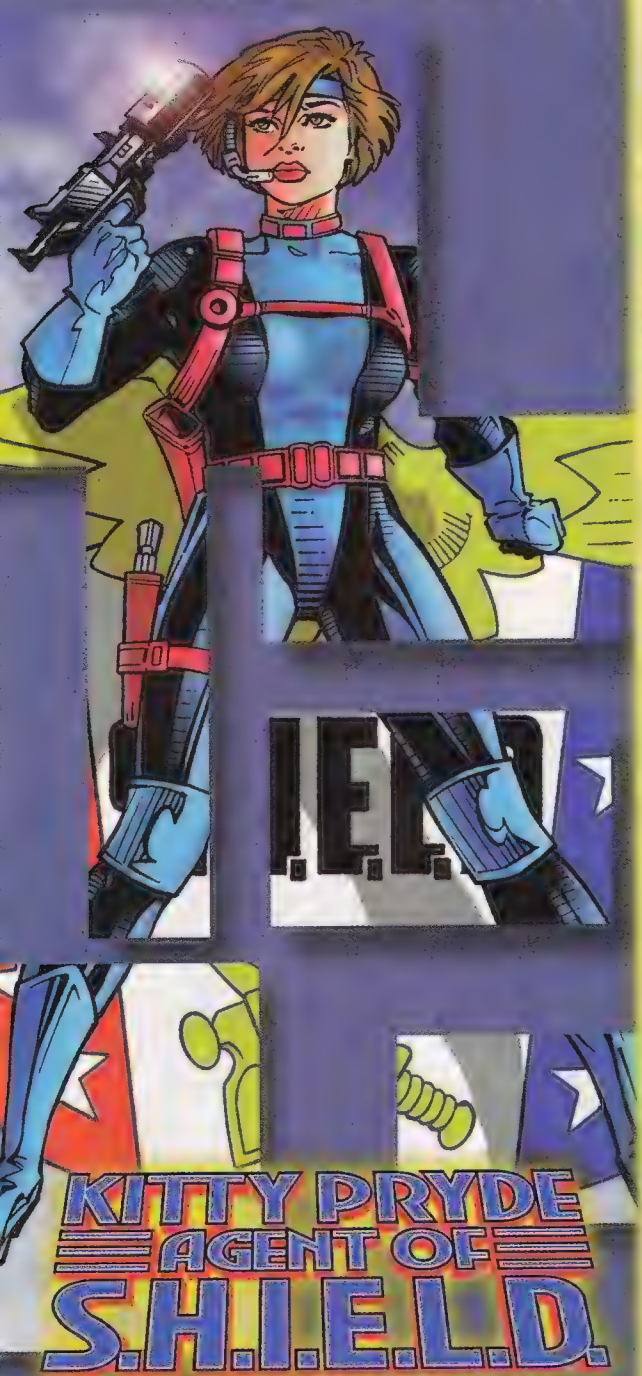
In many ways, Kelly still hasn't fully fathomed all his good fortune, but seems determined to make the most of it. "Stuff like this article I just find fascinating, the idea that someone would actually be interested in what I have to say is so staggering. It's just a big honor. And I do have that fanboy sensibility, 'Oh my God, I can't believe this is happening to me! I get to meet [writer] Chris Claremont!'" He falls back against his chair, spent. "I can't picture a better way to lead my life than this, it's wonderful."

So what comes next for Kelly? The pool. No more waiting. It's been a miserably hot day, and he's earned his pool time just by surviving the heat. But getting back to the question, what comes next for Kelly, career-wise? "I can't wait to come back [from the honeymoon] and just be working on comics, because I really haven't yet. I had one month off from school before all the hard-core wedding stuff kicked in. Afterwards, I have nothing to do except comic books. Now this will be my job. I'm really looking forward to it, I can't wait to just be a comic book writer, that'll be a really good feeling."

He shakes the pool water from his head and smiles. "But it's like my fiancée Gina says, 'Weddings don't impress me, anniversaries do.' Getting the gig is great, but keeping the gig is what's going to be important. I don't feel like I've arrived. I've been introduced, I've been allowed to hang around at the party, but if I'm around past last call then I know I'm okay." W

Southern California writer Scott Brick sweated the rest of that day out. He forgot his swimming trunks.

THE PRESENT



KITTY PRYDE AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

Kitty Pryde: Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. #1 of 3
Larry Hama • Jesus Redondo • Sergio Melia

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WOLVERINE
DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

Wolverine: Days of Future Past #1 of 3
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Wizard *casts the* Lady Death *movie!*

Casting Call

By a bunch of *Wizard* staffers

All photos not credited are from the Everett Collection.

Everybody likes spooky movies with supernatural elements. "A Nightmare on Elm Street." "Bram Stoker's Dracula." "Interview with the Vampire." You get the idea.

Here in comicland, we've got a couple of candidates to pitch Hollywood's way—particularly the devilish Lady Death and the Chaos! Comics troupe. A movie with these cold-blooded characters would have all the stuff audiences would like: healthy women, hellish demons and homicidal maniacs. Even a smart-ass talking button.

We here at *Wizard* figured we'd do Hollywood a favor and actually do a Halloween-related flick and prepare the casting ourselves. We think it's cool as Hell.

© Andrew Eccles/Outline

LADY DEATH

This busty ruler of the Endless Graveyard (where you go when yer pushin' up daisies) would be portrayed very well by another busty gal with a li'l bit of a bad girl in her: model Anna Nicole Smith. And hey, she even had an acting turn in "Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult."

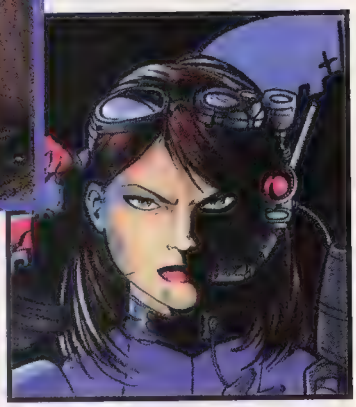
EVIL ERNIE

This pissed-off homicidal maniac has an sinister grin only Garett Maggart from UPN's "The Sentinel" can match.

© Laura Luongo/Outline

DR. MARY YOUNG

The strong-willed former babysitter of Evil Ernie has a quality that Elizabeth Berkley pulled off well in "Showgirls."



© Pat Harbron/Outline

SMILEY

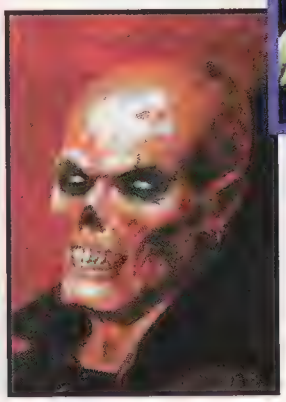
Though only a wisecrackin' sociopathic button, Smiley would be best served with a wisecrackin'-style voice. Bobcat Goldthwait did a similar shtick in Disney's "Hercules."

PURGATORI

Salma Hayek did a fine job as a sultry vampire in "From Dusk Till Dawn," so she's a natural for this ancient bloodsucker.

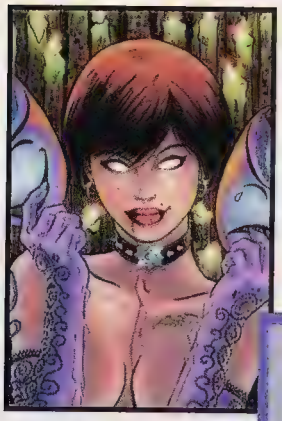
DR. LEONARD PRICE

Lee Majors ("The Fall Guy") is wonderfully gritty enough to play the obsessive creator and hunter of Evil Ernie.



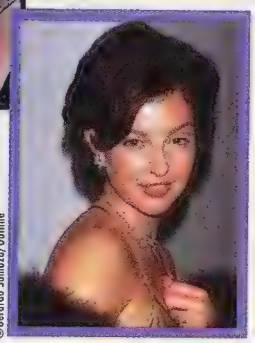
DEAD KING

The guy formerly known as Homicide is Evil Ernie's right-hand man in organizing Ernie's undead army. Kevin Bacon proved in "Sleepers" he'd do a great job kicking the world's ass.



CHASTITY

This vampire-turned-vampire-hunter has an innocent quality, but can also kick butt when necessary. Ashley Judd has been all those things in "A Time to Kill" and "Marilyn & Norma Jean."



©Gerardo Somoza/Outline

CREMATOR

The edgy weaponsmith of Hell would be pulled off excellently by a guy familiar to edgy and spooky roles: Jeff Kober from "The First Power."

©G. Croft/Outline

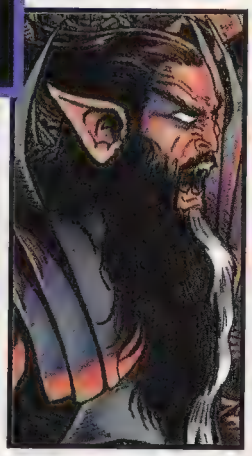
©Cori Wells Brown/Outline

PAGAN

What do you get when you match a caustically funny court jester of Hell (Pagan) with a similar-looking, caustically funny comedian from Hell (Denis Leary)? A perfect match.

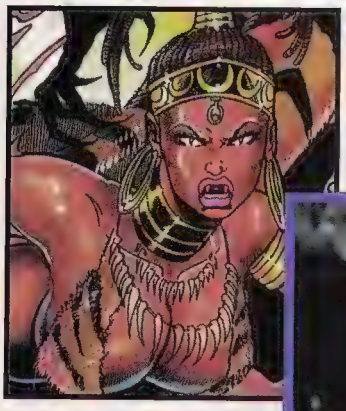
MATTHIAS

The medieval sorcerer daddy of Lady Death looks just like Billy Gibbons from the rock band ZZ Top. He wouldn't even need acting lessons—he was in "Back to the Future, Part 3," after all.



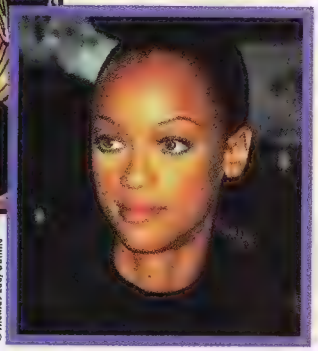
JADE

This Chinese vampire often takes a walk on the wild side. Heck, Thuy Trang did that in her sleep in "The Crow: City of Angels." W



KABALA

Model Tyra Banks has the perfect look to play Chaos!'s queen of the vampires set on destroying Purgatori.



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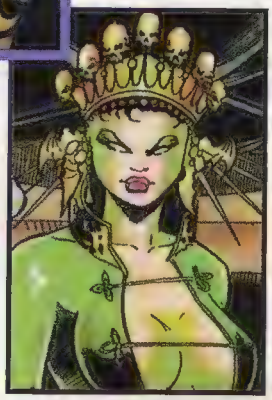

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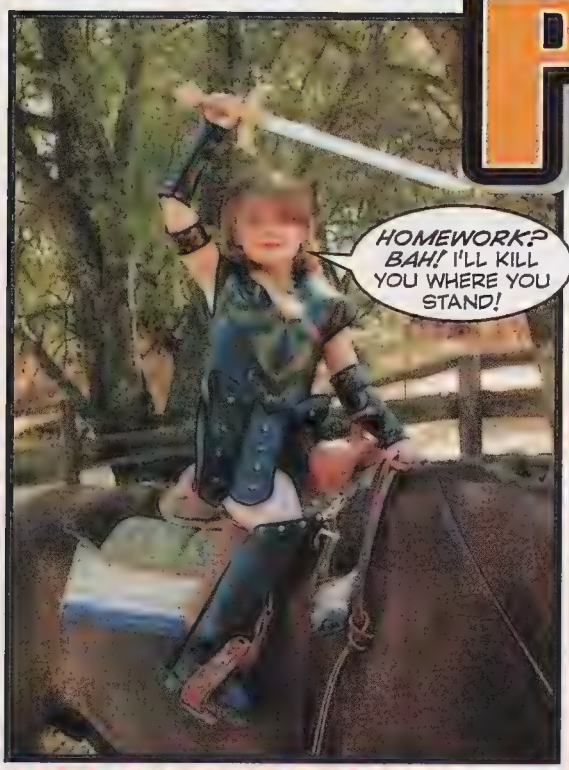


XENA, WARRIOR PRINCESS
Rose Bondurant, *El Dorado, CA*

The Winners of the Sixth Annual Halloween Costume Contest

YEE-HAH!

As the sixth annual *Wizard* Halloween Costume Contest rumbles towards its close, know that all the honorable-mention winners each win a killer stack of 15 comics autographed by some of the industry's biggest names, while the Runner-Up takes home a Wolverine statue, a Next Men statue, a Crow, Joker and King Kong model kit, an X-Men video and a Next Men T-shirt signed by John Byrne! The Grand Prize Winner burns down the barn with a Wolverine statue, a Frankenstein statue (which kicks huge ass!), a Super Nintendo (and assorted cartridges), a Hulk laser-sculpture, a Joker model kit, an X-Men video and a stylin' Sin City T-shirt! **Congrats to all the winners!**

JLA ***Costumes by Mark Doyle,*** *Whitman, MA*
Green Lantern: Andrew Kenealy, Superman: Michael Scott, Green Arrow: Joseph Brack, Batman: Mark Doyle, Martian Manhunter: Robert Munstis and Aquaman: Brian Murphy

DR. STRANGE
Peter Knight, *Westbury, NY*

Up With No Go

BATMAN & ROBIN
Brian Gulyia and Rob Hawkins, *Brich, NJ*

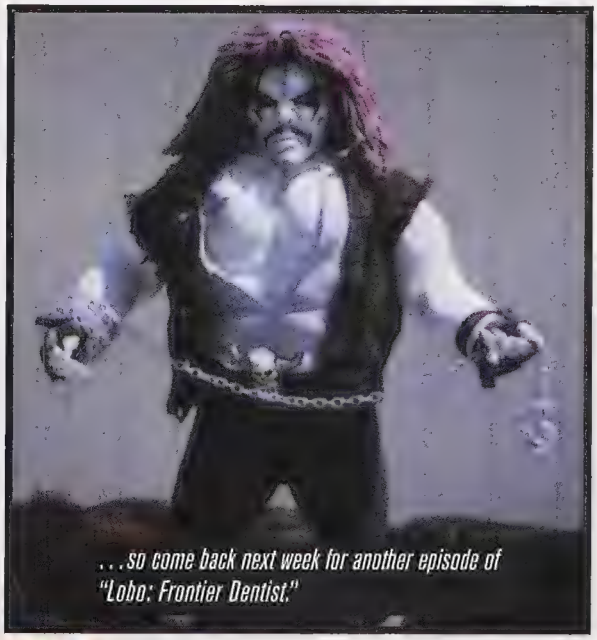
CATWOMAN
Lynn Timm, *Montville, CT*

THE THING
Jeff Outlaw, *Carnegie, PA*

GREEN ARROW & GREEN LANTERN
Page Christian and Brad Douglas, *Laguna Beach, FL*

GEN13 ***Costumes by Brian Parsley,*** *Panama City, FL*
Freefall: Anna Blackwell, Burnout: Scott Crum, Fairchild: Kristi Crum, Rainmaker: Jennifer Way, Grunge: John Banks

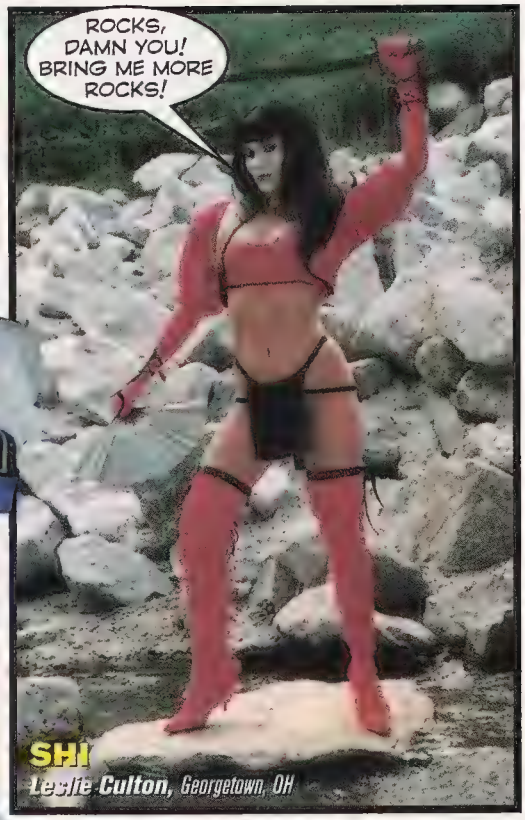
DARKSEID
James M. Gill, *Carrolltown, PA*



LOBO
Ken Turner, *Hamilton, Ontario, Canada*

RED SKULL
Michael Turner, *Pittsburgh, PA*

EARTHWORM JIM
Christopher Reader, *Mission Hills, CA*



SHI
Leslie Culton, *Georgetown, OH*

*TEE-HEE! GET IT? "INVISIBLE JET"...? Ahhhh, NEVER MIND.

SUPERMAN & WONDER WOMAN
Frank & Gina Logan, *Jackson, NJ*

AMERICAN FLAGG & RAUL
Daron Jensen & Raul, *Bourbonnais, IL*

SCARLET WITCH
Rebecca Avello, *Hollywood, FL*

ROBOCOP
Juan C. Alcantara, *N. Miami Beach, FL*

1ST RUNNER-UP
AMALGAM ***Costumes by Scott Crawford,*** *Columbus, OH*
Amazon: Kim Guest, Dark Claw: Scott Crawford, Runaway: Betty Ann, Angelhawk: Jason Snyder, Green Goblin: Joe Boudrie, Ferro Man: Andrew Redd

THE DEMON NEPTHYS, MOTHER OF THE PHARAOHS AND GIVER OF THE DARK GIFT! TONIGHT SHE COMES FOR ME AND MY LOVE, KRYLA. BUT I SHALL NOT LET HER TAKE US!
I AM DRAYVEN, I AM THE FIRST OF THE VAMPYRE. THIS IS MY STORY. ARE YOU PREPARED?
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GRAND PRIZE WINNER

JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Costumes by Kelly Delcambre, *New Iberia, LA*

Hawkman: Jeff Roberts, Flash: Kelly Delcambre,
Dr. Fate: Jody Perry, Wonder Woman: Kate Delcambre,
Dr. Midnite: Mark Delcambre, Green Lantern: Allen Ulrich

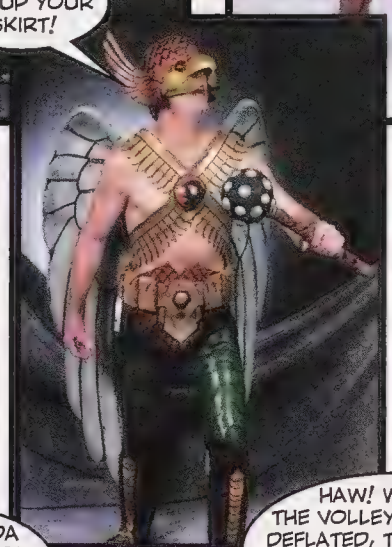
It took our man Kelly here some two years to whip up these awesome JSA members, and it certainly shows! So how'd he make 'em? "A lot of visits to thrift stores around the area, a lot of hot glue, fabric and foam, and a lot of sweat, blood and tears," he says.

Kelly, a Golden Age nostalgia buff, says the hardest thing about putting these together was the research. "I had to go a little deeper to say, 'Okay, am I gonna make these costumes cartoony looking, more or less along the lines of Spandex?' And I decided no, I'm not putting these things in Spandex or Lycra, they're kinda hokey. So I took a lot of trips to the library and comic book conventions with some of the people that created these characters. I had an interview with [Golden Age artist] Sheldon Moldoff, and he was the one who inspired me to create these costumes."

As for Kelly's future work, the King of Costume Makers is currently working on a Plastic Man costume—with hydraulics to make the arms stretch—and hoping to "wrap up the JSA. I'm still in the process of finishing up the whole roundtable: Sandman, Atom, Hourman and Starman."

And hey, one last thing before we go. We don't say this as often as we should, but you guys—the fans—are just awesome. Your enthusiasm to dress up like maniacs in public, have your photos shown in an international magazine with us poking fun at you, well...you guys are just the best! Without you, *Wizard* would suck.

Thanks for helping us kick butt again this month, and we'll do this costume insanity thing again next year! W



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JIM LEE

THE WIZARD Q&A

BY MATTHEW SENREICH

Pondering life after 'Heroes Reborn,' the artist takes aim at more Marvel heroes and WildStorm's new fantasy series

"You're looking at my finger, huh?" Jim Lee asks, as he points his hand toward the window offering the sunny ocean view outside his La Jolla, Calif., studio window. "Long story, but the short version: I broke my pinky playing softball with the rest of the WildStorm guys. It was my glove hand and I caught the ball, went down and the whole office turned into slow motion. They were like, 'Is he okay? Please tell me it's his left hand, not his drawing hand.'"

Behind his laughter is a hint of relief. After all, his drawing hand is responsible for his super-successful runs on *Uncanny X-Men* and *X-Men* back in the early '90s, which paved the way for him and five other former Marvel artists to form Image Comics. Through Image—specifically his own WildStorm Productions studio—Lee has maintained an ever-growing stable of books including *WildC.A.T.s* and *Gen13* (both of which Lee penciled for a time). Nowadays, Lee is completing a highly popular year-long contract with Marvel Comics to revitalize *Avengers*, *Captain America*, *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man*, during which Lee not only oversaw all four books, but penciled six issues of *Fantastic Four*.

"While it was fun to go back and do more Marvel stuff, I think it may have been the last time I pencil a Marvel book," Lee says as he gazes downward at his desk, where he's penciling a page of his upcoming WildStorm title *Divine Right: The Adventures of Max Faraday*. "Personally, I want to focus on my company and my studio right now, and add to its..."

Lee pauses and glances upward, eyebrows raised, and then drops his head back to the page in front of him. His hand zips back and forth as he starts to draw what looks like an angel. "Sorry. You can talk to me while I'm drawing," Lee says, casually whisking his pencil across the page in front of him. "Now that I'm editor-in-chief at WildStorm, I think I'm learning to be more productive in the time I have when it comes to the office."

And it's exactly because of his recent productivity that *Wizard* flew out to the sunny San Diego area to ask Lee all about his new project, question him about his perceptions of "Heroes Reborn" and find out how he plans on topping it in the year to come.

WIZARD: Now that "Heroes Reborn" is coming to a close, what did you think of the whole experience?

JIM LEE: Parts were great and others were disappointing. [Marvel] gave us an assignment. We were supposed to revitalize *Fantastic Four*, *Iron Man*, *Captain America* and *Avengers*. Rob [Liefeld] and I picked the titles we wanted to work on and we went out there and did our jobs. I think we made the characters interesting, updated them and got kids and fans to pick up books that they weren't normally picking up. *Fantastic Four* is now a flagship title for Marvel Comics and hopefully it will be able to retain that status after "Heroes Reborn" ends. On the level of sales, I think it was a tremendous success. We practically tripled sales on the book. It generated new interest in these characters.

On the flip side, though, all the ["Heroes Reborn"] politics is depressing. It leaves a bad taste in my mouth. If anyone goes out there and takes a group of books that no one seems to care about, triples sales and gets the readers excited by it, everyone will be slapping him on the back and saying great job. That wasn't there for us, and there are people still denying the obvious success we've had. It hurts that [Marvel] doesn't want to give credit where credit is due, for whatever reason. I am looking forward to seeing what Marvel does with the characters after they get them back, because they have all these great ideas that may never have happened unless "Heroes Reborn" happened. It was just a very unpopular project at Marvel Comics, and it was hard to do a project for a company that was not really supportive of it.

Marvel didn't support "Heroes Reborn"?

I don't think they were very crazy about the project from day one. It seems like it was something that was forced on editorial. And I don't blame them for not being into it. If we [WildStorm] were Marvel employees, technically straight Marvel employees, or even just Marvel freelancers, the editors would have loved it. But now they can't, because they have to admit another company is doing something they couldn't.

I think we did Marvel a huge favor. In a sense, we brought life back into these characters that were losing it fast.

There is talk of you doing some more books for Marvel.

We are talking about it, but nothing has been signed yet.

What books are you talking about?

On the list was *Defenders*, *Doctor Strange*, *Nick Fury*, *Punisher* and maybe another. The idea was to have a little group of four or five titles interactive with one another and to see if [WildStorm] can work some magic again. And if we get them, we'd write and draw them in Marvel continuity. [EDITOR'S NOTE: The "Heroes Reborn" books took place in an alternate universe.] I don't really know what I'll do with them if I get them yet, but I have ideas. [*Smiles*]

Like what?

When *Doctor Strange* began, Stephen Strange was this cold-hearted surgeon that had this tragic accident. In searching for a cure to this freak accident that kept him from using his hands, he learned sorcery and found his humanity. That humanity aspect has gotten lost over the years, and it's really what makes the character. Doctor Strange is one of those characters that creators all really want to take a stab at, but at the same time, he's never been very popular among fans. I think the reason is that he's always been a little too peculiar, which can fascinate writers, but scare off readers. Whoever I get to write it will bring some of the humanity back, although the trick with *Doctor Strange* is finding an artist that really can handle the mystical sorcery part of it. If the deal pans out, I'd also definitely stick Doctor Strange in the Defenders.

The Defenders revolves around Doctor

"I don't blame Marvel for not being into it. They have to admit another company is doing something they couldn't."

—JIM LEE on 'Heroes Reborn'

Lee begins his scripting career with his new fantasy series, *Divine Right*.

Strange and the fact that this super-sorcerer is unable to deal with a threat by himself. He needs help. Characters like Ghost Rider and the Hulk could fit well on the team. I wouldn't want to just throw characters together, but I can see myself working in characters like Namor, Silver Surfer or Iron Fist. It's a pretty unusual group of characters, and the key is to find a compelling reason as to why it's they who are involved. They don't particularly like each other that much, so we really need to find a reason besides "it would be cool" to put them together to form a story.

With *Nick Fury*, I just always thought Fury was a cool character, and had a great name and a great look. To me, Fury is one of the most important characters in the Marvel Universe. He's in charge of this powerful espionage organization, S.H.I.E.L.D. He heads a group of normal guys that know more than anyone else about what's going on in the world and go head-to-head with guys like Reed Richards or the Avengers. The United States asks Fury to protect [its] interests and normal humans' interests in a world where the Avengers, X-Men or even the Fantastic Four run around unchecked. There is just no way you would have any superheroes running around without government supervision or interference. That's why he's important.

Would you write or draw any of these books?

No. I'd write up a brief bible synopsis of what the characters were about and the way I see [each] character. If I had to work on any of them directly, it would be *Nick Fury*. I could see myself co-plotting Nick Fury with Brandon Choi, because we both like that character and I think that we can do some interesting stuff with it. But I wouldn't draw any of them.

What is your next project going to be?

It's called *Divine Right: The Adventures of Max Faraday*. It's a story about an unassuming college-age kid, Max Faraday, who accidentally gets his hands on something called the "Creation Equation," which gives him godlike powers. Anytime you have power in the WildStorm Universe, you are going to become the focus of scrutiny, the object of desire by many different parties, and that's what happens to Max. Basically we find that there are two or three different groups that are after him. There is a bigger story, and it's somewhat tied into history and religion, which slowly paints over the issues. The bigger picture is that there was a day and age when religious people defined our universe, the Earth was considered the center of the universe and things happened

JIM LEE

Vital Stats

OCCUPATION: Comic book writer/artist, Image Comics co-owner and WildStorm Studios editor-in-chief

BORN: August 11, 1964 in Seoul, South Korea

BASE OF OPERATIONS: La Jolla, Calif.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Broke into comics in 1987 penciling Marvel's *Alpha Flight*, followed by stints on *Punisher War Journal*, *Uncanny X-Men* and *X-Men*, which brought him superstar status. In 1992, he co-founded Image Comics. Currently he's wrapping up a year-long contract managing all four "Heroes Reborn" books for Marvel.

FAVORITE WORK OF HIS OWN: "Doing the first issue of *X-Men*, with however many copies it sold, was a dream come true."

After Marvel dropped Rob Liefeld from "Heroes Reborn" six months into its run, Lee oversaw all four "Reborn" books, including *Captain America*.

because of God. Over time in history, science prevailed. My story is about these people who want to redefine our lives through religion versus the people that want to keep defining it through science. It's not just about good and evil, not just about a guy that wants a million dollars or to blow up the city, but much more. It'll have angels and demons, the whole works.

How would you describe Max Faraday?

I'd say he is a slacker, but a pretty bright kid. Sometimes circumstances don't really allow people to reach their full potential, and he is a guy that is a struggling college student or community college student, got a part-time job as a pizza delivery boy and lives with his older sister. He's just trying to find his way in life as a young adult. He has this quasi-girlfriend that he met over the Internet, but has never met her face-to-face. He gets her tangled up in this whole storyline, and then he's got to save this faceless woman. The easiest thing to do is create a superhero team of five characters that have had their powers forever; they get their mission and are bad-asses from day one. I want to examine a guy that really was one day delivering pizza and slowly becomes the most powerful being in the universe.

How long do you plan to stay on this book?

The goal is for at least 20 issues. There are only a few projects that would come in the way and make me take time off from this. For the most part, I have 20 to 25 issues' worth, over three years of material thought out.

How is *Divine Right* going to tie into the rest of the WildStorm Universe?

It's definitely set in the WildStorm Universe, and you will see storylines involving other characters from the WildStorm Universe, like the Gen[13] team or Grifter. But none of that will show until after I set it up. Part of the fun of doing a new WildStorm book is that it allows me to deal with more characters within the WildStorm Universe.

Do you plan on working on any other WildStorm titles like *WildC.A.T.s* again someday?

Maybe, but for now, there are only two ways I can think of to make me leave *Divine Right*. Neil Gaiman and I had talked about doing something for a long time. I would love to work with him at some point. And if certain things were to happen, I would love to do a Star Wars project at some point. But that's it. That's really the two projects that I would make time to do. I would love to work with all the best guys in the industry, both writers and artists.

Now that you are editor-in-chief of WildStorm again, what are some of the big overhauls you're doing with the WildStorm Universe?

We are canceling the books that aren't selling well to make a little room for some new ones. The creators that are doing "Heroes Reborn" stuff are coming off of that, and have projects that they want to do. And we have [*Gen[13]* penciler] J. Scott Campbell doing a new project, *Danger Girl*.

I would love to do something with [writers] Chris Claremont or Neil Gaiman. I hear [*Uncanny X-Men* penciler] Joe Madureira is going to leave Marvel and do something else. I'd love him to do something with us. That's all we can really count on: the quality and

As editor-in-chief of WildStorm, Lee oversees books like (from top) *Leave it to Chance*, *Gen[13]* and *Astro City*.

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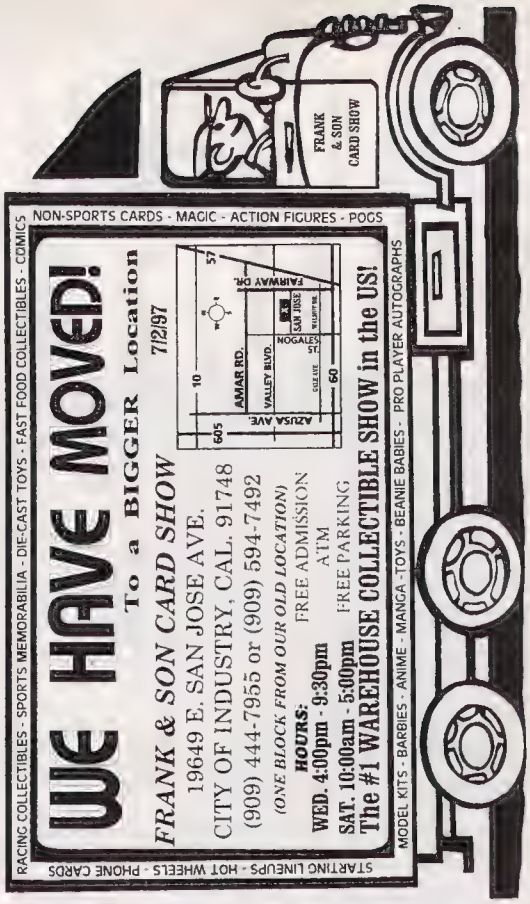

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The Right STUFF

JIM LEE SOUNDS OFF ON THE NEW BREED OF SUPERSTAR ARTISTS IN THE INDUSTRY

J. SCOTT CAMPBELL (Gen13) "Each part of his figures seems round and three-dimensional in terms of the lines and contours that he is picking. There is a real sense of thought that goes into the simple gestures that you see in all his different characters."

Ian Churchill (The Coven) "This is a guy that Marvel should have signed up to take over *Fantastic Four* after I left. He has pretty intricate linework and a real solidness to his characters. I like the fact that he can draw large characters and make them look normal."

Joe Madureira (Uncanny X-Men) "He's going against the flow on a lot of things in terms of women, relative size of hands and feet, and so on. There are a lot of people who are trying to imitate his look, which shows how good Joe is at what he does."

Carlos Pacheco (X-Men) "He's got elements of American, European and Japanese art all mixed together. What I like about his work, beyond just the way he draws, is the storytelling."

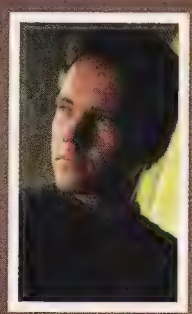
Randy Queen (Darkchylde) "For a guy who's still very young, he has a very strong sense of what should be in the characters he creates. His style is like Todd McFarlane mixed with Jeff Scott Campbell, and yet very distinctively his."

Alex Ross (Kingdom Come) "He's a hack. [*Laughs*] He's a guy that paints as well as he draws. He makes the characters look like they would if they really existed. I am always in awe of his stuff."

Michael Turner (Witchblade) "I like the certain styles he brings to each character's dress. I'm impressed by the male characters and the design work, including the candles, tattoos and things like that. He has a real romantic style."

Mike Wieringo (Sensational Spider-Man) "[His work is] real polished. It has that cartoony feel without making you feel like you're watching a kid's cartoon. It's appealing to both adults and kids, which is a tough thing to accomplish. He does a great Spider-Man that really makes the character look fluid." ■ *MS*

CAMPBELL


CHURCHILL

PAUL SCHRADI
MADUREIRA

PACHECO

PAUL SCHRADI
QUEEN

PAUL SCHRADI
ROSS

TURNER

PAUL SCHRADI
WIERINGO

caliber of our writers and artists. We don't have characters with long-standing history like Superman, Batman or Spider-Man. That's always been our handicap and that's why we always focused on the creators more than anything else from day one.

Seems like you're restructuring a bit. Shifting gears to your creator-owned imprint Homage Comics, what are the plans to expand that line?

It's not one of those things [for which] we have this five-year game plan to get 50 books a month. It depends on the projects pitched and the projects we go after. After *Astro City* and *Leave it to Chance*, the biggest ones we have coming up are Scott McCloud's next book *The New Adventures of Abraham Lincoln*, and an Alan Moore project called *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* that he is doing with Kevin O'Neil [*Marshal Law*]. *Abraham Lincoln* will be about Abraham and how he comes to defend this little black boy. It's an unusual story that he is doing completely through computer graphics. Alan's project is about this group of Victorian-age characters that have banded together and formed one of Earth's first modern-day superhero teams.

Do you ever plan on adding a book of your own to Homage?

No. WildStorm is my line. Maybe if I did something with Neil [Gaiman], it might be for Homage.

Of all the things you've done, what is your most memorable moment in comics?

It's going to sound stupid, but I was at this comic book convention in Barcelona last year and I did this sketch for a kid who was 12 or 14 years old. I drew this picture of a character. I can't even remember what character it was, but I literally watched his eyes light up. This huge smile crossed his face as he cheered up instantly. I just realized the impact you can have on people with your work, and sometimes you forget that. Sometimes you see all these people lined up and you just see them as people that want your autograph. You don't realize that each of them are like you were when you were a kid simply loving comics.

That moment in Barcelona may have been the highlight of my career. I even consider it a re-inspiration for me to get passionate about comics again. All I know is, I was moved. And I realized I have to slow down here a little bit and simply appreciate everything going on in comic books today. W

Wizard Staff Writer Matthew Senreich used to hustle unsuspecting customers at local arcades, and now HE is the most powerful being in the universe.

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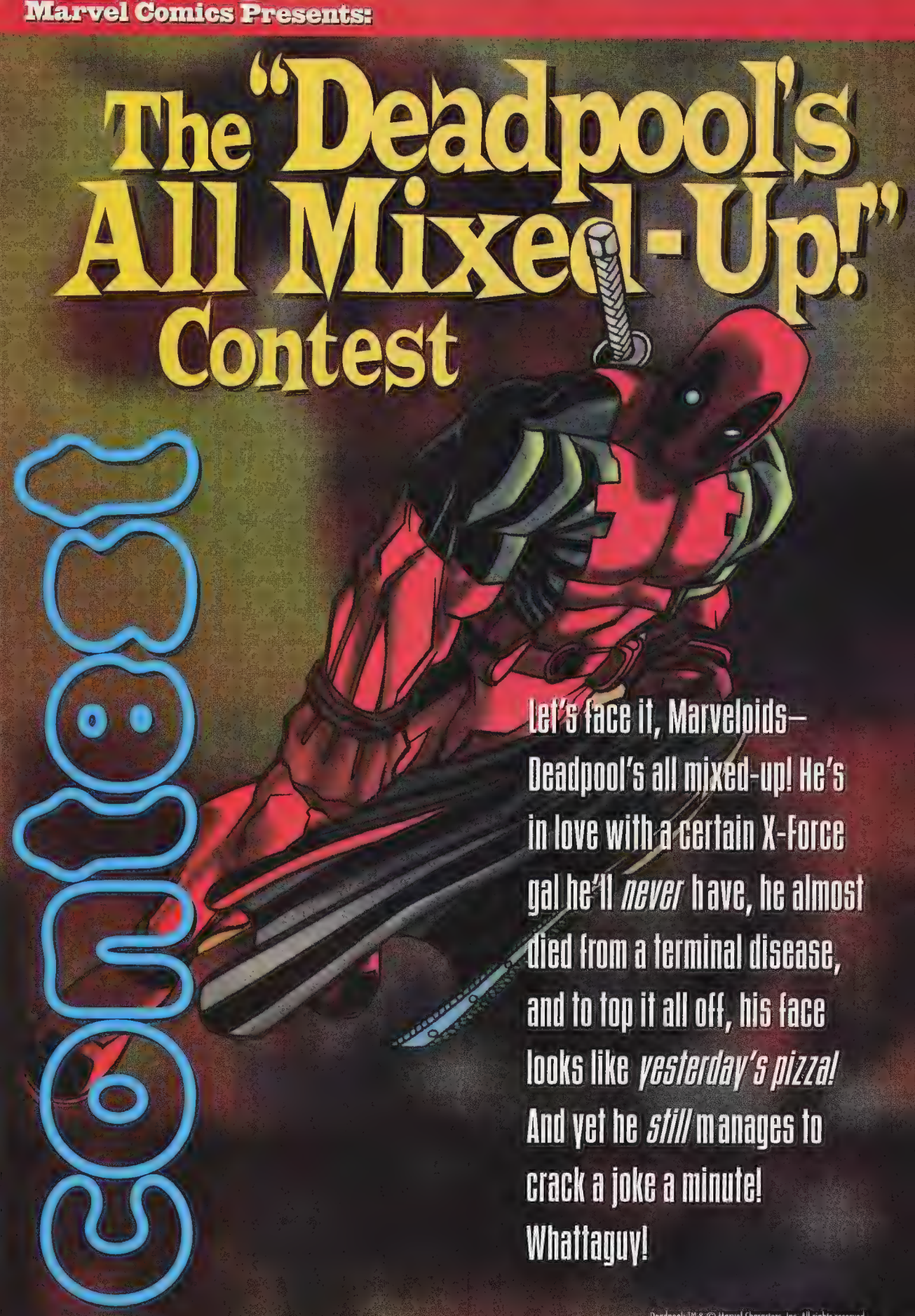
The "Deadpool's All Mixed-Up!" Contest



Let's face it, Marveloids—Deadpool's all mixed-up! He's in love with a certain X-Force gal he'll *never* have, he almost died from a terminal disease, and to top it all off, his face looks like *yesterday's pizza!* And yet he *still* manages to crack a joke a minute! Whattaguy!

Deadpool: ™ & © Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

Anyway, since Deadpool's so ultimately mixed-up, we want you to try and *un*-mix his crazy life! Listed below are six members of *Deadpool's* supporting cast. The only trick is, they're scrambled! If you successfully unscramble all six character names, you'll have a shot at winning some of these fantastic prizes:

Grand Prize (1): One lucky contest winner will receive the ultimate Deadpool prize package: an autographed page of artwork from penciler Ed McGuinness, an autographed script from writer Joe Kelly and an congratulatory phone call from editor Matt Idelson! And hey, just for the taste of it...just for the feel of it...a complete set of *Deadpool* comics from #1 to the current issue! About $200 worth of prizes!

Second Prize (5): Five runners-up will each receive a full set of *Deadpool* comics, from #1 to the current issue!

DEADPOOL'S WACKY CAST O' CHARACTERS:

1. ILBDN LDFRAE
2. YRNIS
3. SEEWLA
4. A-TYR
5. IPYHODT AMYR
6. HTPCA

This month's contest is sponsored by Marvel Comics—the House of Ideas.

Fill this out and put it in an envelope. Send to: Deadpool Mixed-Up Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Deadline is November 28, 1997.

Pool of Dead Lawyers

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Marvel Comics, their immediate families and Deadpool's cousins Wading, Cess and Kiddie. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Deadpool Mixed-Up Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. A real dead pool—y'know, where you place bets to see when people will die—is evil. If you are a part of one, you will be crushed by furniture and go to Hell. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by November 28, 1997.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected randomly from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Winning entries will be selected on or about December 15, 1997.

For a list of winners, available after December 15, 1997, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Deadpool Mixed-Up Winners List, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

The "Deadpool's All Mixed-Up" Entry Form

DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 28, 1997!

Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

The unscrambled names are:

#1. _____

#2. _____

#3. _____

#4. _____

#5. _____

#6. _____

Basic Training

this month's host: Mike Mignola

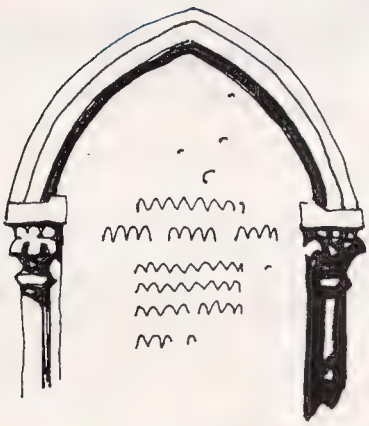
How to Build a Better Graveyard

Hello, I'm Mike Mignola. I've been knocking around the comics industry for about 14 years now and I've drawn all sorts of things for all sorts of people. Lately, I've been writing and drawing my own book—*Hellboy*. It's sort of an action/adventure/horror/mystery kind of thing; lots of ghosts and monsters flying around banging into each other. Anyway, I've gotten a reputation for drawing dark, moody stuff, so the people at *Wizard* thought I'd be the right guy to teach you about drawing spooky graveyards. And hey, it is *Wizard*'s annual Halloween-themed issue, so what perfect timing!

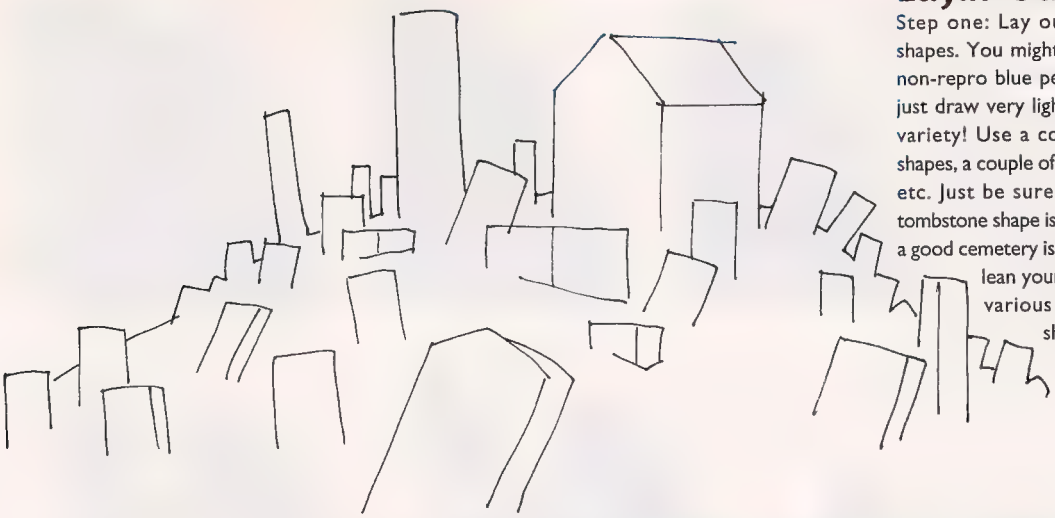
Hellboy Sr.

Not So Fast!

First, I want to talk about reference. (I hear people out there groaning, but please bear with me.) We Americans actually keep most of our dead people, so there's sure to be a cemetery near you. Go look at it. Take pictures. Concentrate on the old section. That's probably where you'll find a greater variety of tombstones, statues, etc.

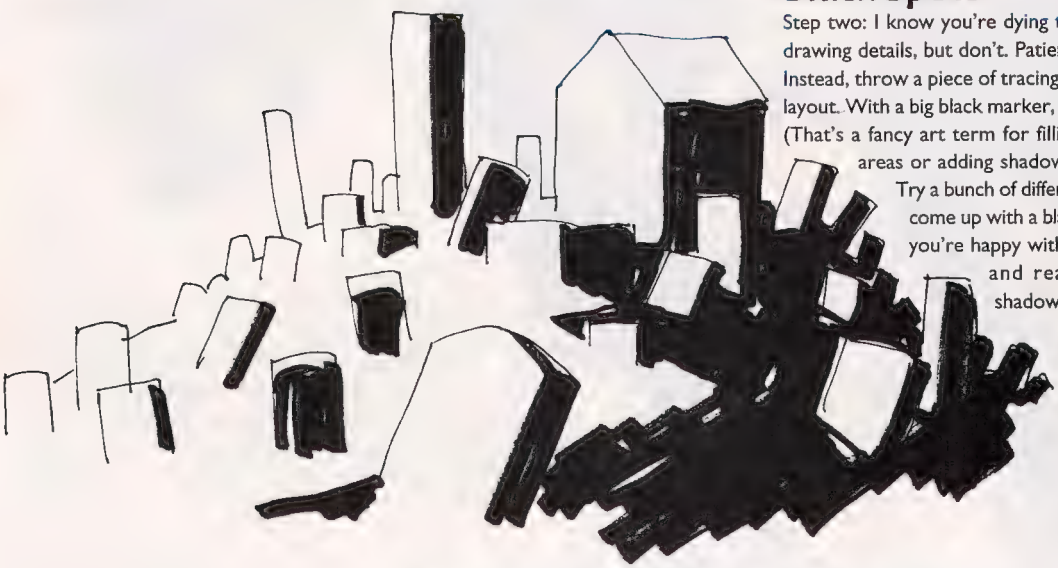


Now, you want to avoid drawing the cemetery on the right. Boring! Lack of visual information is a clear sign that you made everything up. And that just takes away from the spooky realism. The drawing on the left, however, is based on a real tombstone. Looks better, doesn't it? Okay, down to business: Let's draw a graveyard.



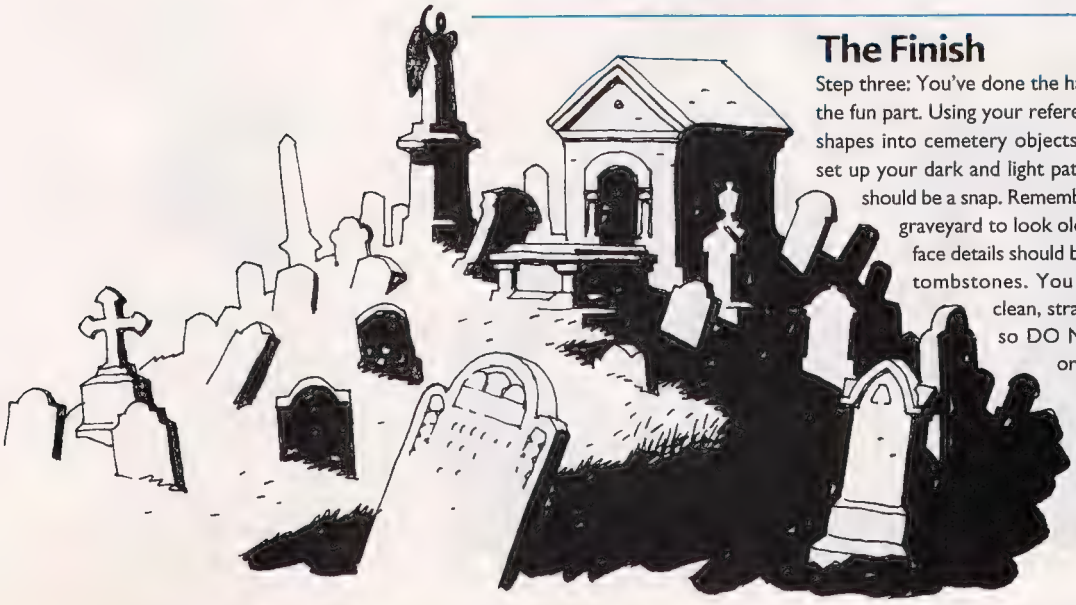
Layin' Out

Step one: Lay out your rough shapes. You might want to use a non-repro blue pencil for this or just draw very lightly. Remember variety! Use a couple of bigger shapes, a couple of tall shiny things, etc. Just be sure that the basic tombstone shape is dominant. Since a good cemetery is old and spooky, lean your tombstones at various angles to help show its age.



Black Spots

Step two: I know you're dying to go right on to drawing details, but don't. Patience, my children. Instead, throw a piece of tracing paper over your layout. With a big black marker, spot your blacks. (That's a fancy art term for filling in your black areas or adding shadows.) Fool around. Try a bunch of different things till you come up with a black/white pattern you're happy with. Then go ahead and really fill in your shadows on the page.

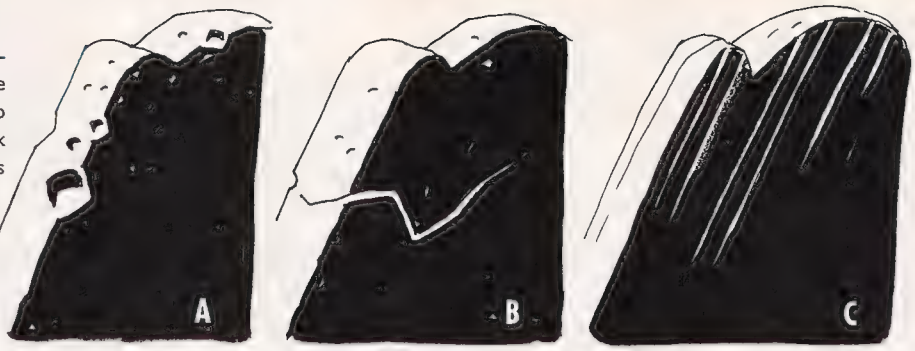


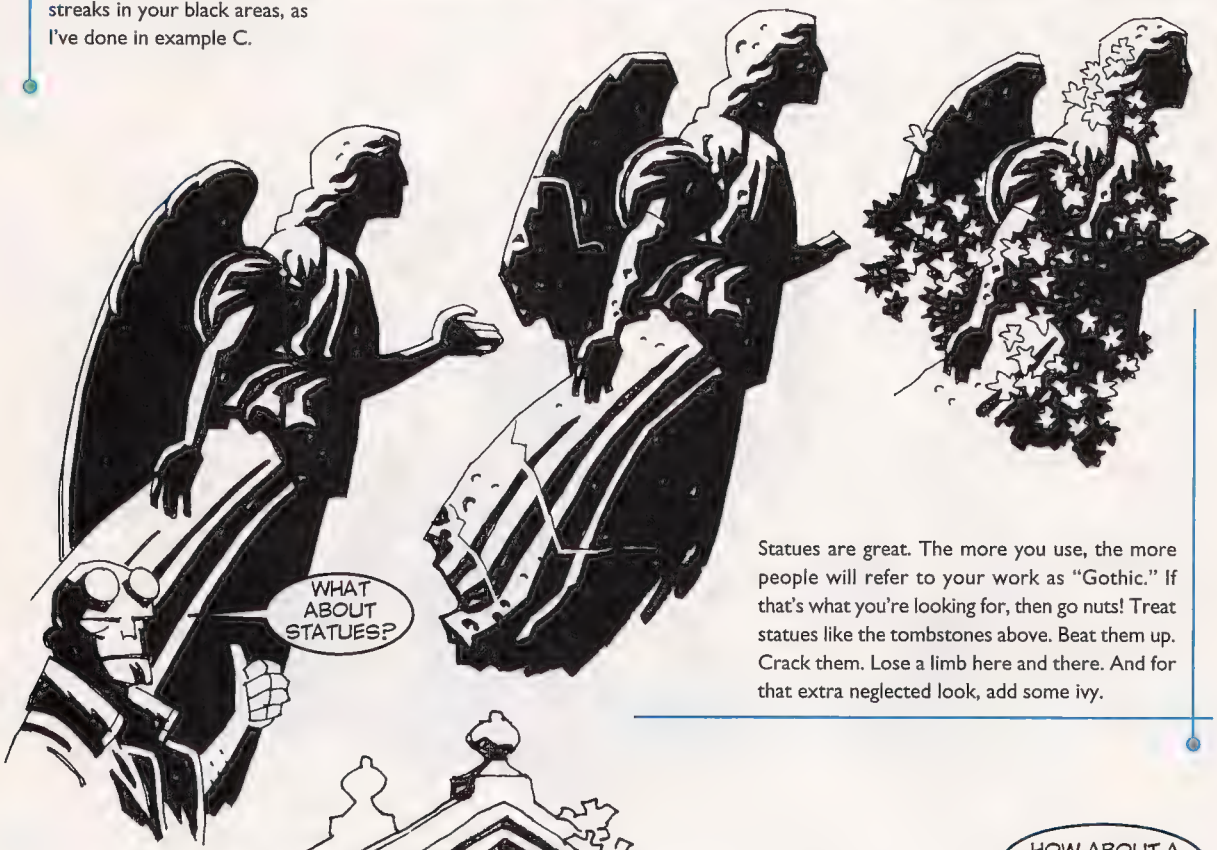
The Finish

Step three: You've done the hard part; now do the fun part. Using your references, turn those shapes into cemetery objects. You've already set up your dark and light pattern, so finishing should be a snap. Remember, you want this graveyard to look old, so a lot of surface details should be worn off of the tombstones. You don't want any clean, straight lines, either, so DO NOT use a ruler or template on anything. Which leads us to...

Texture

When we look at these tombstones up close we want to see that time has not been kind to them. So we need to muck them up a bit. You can do this by chipping the edges (as in example A) or cracking them (like example B). On wooden markers, however, you can show splitting (make sure you go with the wood grain) by leaving white streaks in your black areas, as I've done in example C.



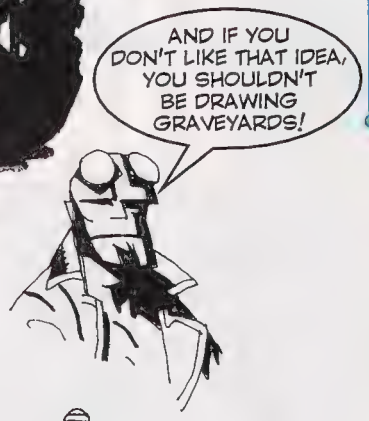


Statues are great. The more you use, the more people will refer to your work as "Gothic." If that's what you're looking for, then go nuts! Treat statues like the tombstones above. Beat them up. Crack them. Lose a limb here and there. And for that extra neglected look, add some ivy.

Sure. You've got to love these—little houses for dead people! Some of these things are pretty elaborate, so be careful you don't get carried away with the detail. You might also want to play down some of the harsh angles with some plant life. Speaking of which, let's go back to that "finished" graveyard drawing.

The Final Cut

All right, we're in the home stretch now. Just a few more details and we're done. Start by adding some trees. Trees in the background pop out those white tombstone shapes on the left, while the closer tree near the right softens the shape of the mausoleum. And make the trees gnarled, leafless and unpleasant. Remember, their roots are sucking the juices out of all those buried dead guys...



Play Misty For Me

Here's a painfully overused technique that's quite effective if done correctly (as seen in figure 1). Design your tombstones so they're predominantly black, then "fade" the black area into a few horizontal lines. Figure 2 isn't very effective because you don't see the tombstone detail, and all those lines give the drawing a mechanical look. Figure 3 isn't very good either (though I've seen plenty of artists do this one). The whole point of this trick is to have things fade into mist, so DON'T DRAW THE GROUND!

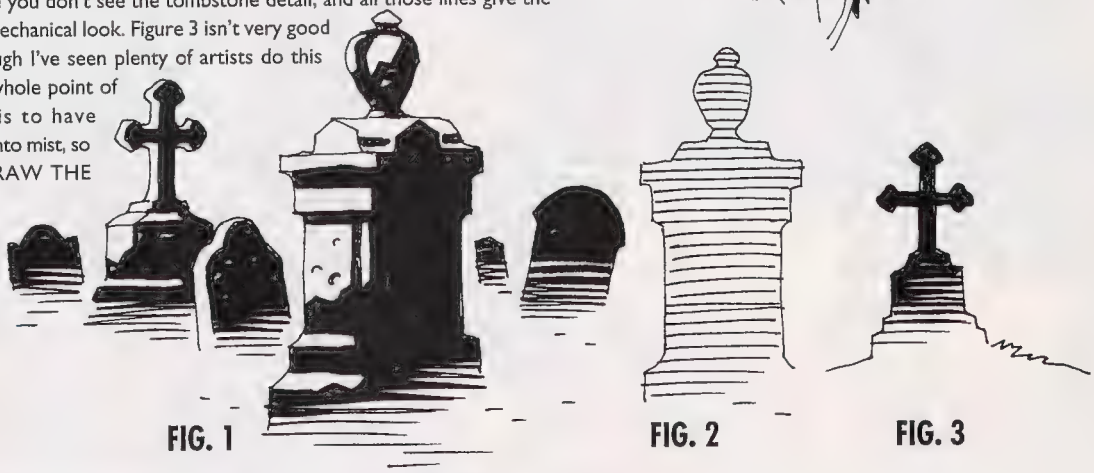


FIG. 1 FIG. 2 FIG. 3

Well, that's about all there is to making your graveyards spookier. Just don't forget the thing about *reference*! Really! Please! A couple hours of picture-taking and you've got great-looking graveyards for the rest of your natural life.

Now go have fun. I'm going back to work. W

Mike Mignola's dark and spooky graveyards can be seen on a somewhat regular basis in the pages of Dark Horse/Legend's Hellboy *comics. Besides October's* Hellboy Jr., *look for December's* A Hellboy Christmas Special. *You'll be glad you did.*

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By David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff

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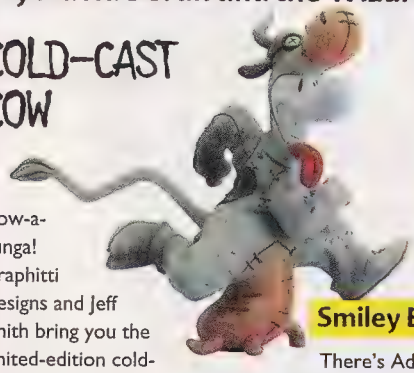


Smiley Bone

Cow-a-bunga! Graphitti Designs and Jeff Smith bring you the limited-edition cold-cast Smiley Bone statue, featuring Smiley in his most lovable pose—inside the cow suit he wore for *Bone* #10's Great Cow race. Standing some 4 inches tall, Smiley is running at top speed, supported only by his udders. Sculpted by Randy Bowen (from a Jeff Smith design), Smiley's limited to 2,500 copies, and ships in December for $79.

MASKING STAR WARS

The Great Coverup/Don Post Studios can help you create your own Mos Eisley Cantina with their assortment of vinyl masks currently in costume and toy shops everywhere.

There's Admiral Ackbar ($50), Boba Fett ($100), Chewbacca ($70), Cantina Band Member ($50), Darth Vader ($60), Emperor Palpatine ($50), Gamorrean Guard ($32), Klaatu ($40), C-3PO ($50), Nien Nunb ($32), Royal Guard ($100), Stormtrooper ($100), Tusken Raider ($32), Wicket W. Warrick ($50) and Yoda ($40). Also look for two display-only deluxe masks of Boba Fett ($1,000) and Darth Vader ($1,200). Twice as large as the vinyls, each deluxe mask was created from original molds used by Lucasfilm and comes signed and numbered with certificates of authenticity. For more info, check out their web page at **http://www.thegreatcoverup.com**.

Harley Plate

Superman Sericel

Batman Cel

WORLD'S FINEST MERCHANDISE

Warner Bros. Studio Stores have some great new offerings. First, the Superman Sericel ($185) is a limited-edition print (2,500 copies), featuring an animated-style Superman in flight. Also available is a limited-edition cel (500 copies) featuring an animated-style Batman jumping feet-first to stop the villainous Clayface. It retails for $425. Finally, check out the limited-edition Harley Quinn plate, spotlighting the Joker's better half. Limited to 2,500 copies, it costs only $35, puddin'!

A CHAOTIC HALLOWEEN

To help celebrate Halloween, get yourself a Chaos! 1997 Comics Halloween Bash T-shirt ($22.95) or the Chaos! Classic Magnet Set #2 ($6.95) from Graphitti Designs. The

Star Wars Masks

Admiral Ackbar

Emperor Palpatine

Boba Fett

shirt features a zombie from the grave by artist Kyle Hotz printed with phosphorescent ink on the back of this black, long-sleeve T-shirt. The magnet set is a nifty (and gruesome) way to decorate your refrigerator, with Nosferata (a vampire), Lodger (a killer) and Tarzana (a jungle woman). Look for 'em all in October.

Purgatori & Dawn CDs

Spooky Product of the Month

A (VAMPIRE) KILLER KIT

Vampires beware! Boneyard Press and Counting Monks Studios are putting Dracula, Blacula (Remember him?) and their ilk to rest with the Vampire Hunter Starter Kit. The kit includes all the tools a budding vampire slayer needs to kick some serious bloodsucker butt: a Gothic cross, bottle of holy water and hand carved wooden stake. It all comes in a nifty hand crafted, velvet-lined wooden box with a skull on the front cover. The kit sells for $77.95, and can be purchased in comic book specialty shops in time for that undead holiday, we call Halloween.

ROCKIN' TO DAWN

Dawn creator Joseph Michael Linsner joins British rock star Gary Numan for *Numan/Dawn*, a CD featuring eight brand-new Dawn paintings by Linsner. Look for it in early 1998 at specialty comic book shops everywhere. (Price pending.) Meanwhile, Scott Vladimir Licinia and Chaos! Comics have created *Purgatori: The Vampire's Myth*, a CD "soundtrack" for *Purgatori* #1-#3. Sixty minutes of music follow the comic, panel by panel, to add to the reading experience. Jim Balent and Jason Jensen provide CD cover art. It's currently available for $12.95 in specialty comic book shops or call 1-888-CHAOS13 to order direct from Chaos! Comics.

HOLY STATUES!

DC Comics brings you the most irreverent statue of all time: The Preacher Statue! This cold-cast porcelain statue, sculpted by William Paquet (from *Preacher* cover artist Glenn Fabry's designs), shows Reverend Jesse Custer lighting up a cigarette, with the burnt remains of his grand-mother off to one side. Limited to just 5,500 copies, look for it this November for $195.

Preacher Statue

Golden's Marvel Universe Poster

A GOLDEN PRINT

WildStorm Fine Arts' newest release, the Marvel Universe Limited Edition Iris Print, features rare promotional artwork of the entire Marvel Universe by Michael Golden. Originally created in 1980, this piece includes almost every character in the Marvel Universe (at that time) with the Watcher looming in the back. For only $150,

this print is limited to just 300 units and comes signed by Golden. It's 16" x 21", with an image size of 10" x 15". Check it out in October.

DUSTING OFF SANDMAN

This November, DC Comics is collecting all 75 of artist Dave McKean's intriguing *Sandman* covers in one 208-page hardcover edition. *The Sandman: Dust Covers Collected Edition* ($39.95) features the full-color covers and extensive commentary from McKean and *Sandman* writer Neil Gaiman telling how each cover was created and how each relates to the respective issue. Topping the book off is an eight-page fictional memoir by Gaiman and McKean reflecting on the role *Sandman* played on its author.

COUNTING THE D'OH!

Bongo Comics and HarperCollins bring you *The Simpsons Comprehensive Episode Guide* ($12). This 250-page over-sized paperback contains synopses of all 178 episodes of "The Simpsons." Each synopsis also contains quote highlights from the episode, as well as obscure gags you may have missed. In addition, this Simpsons encyclopedia contains stuff like: a count of every time Homer says, "D'oh!," an Itchy and Scratchy filmography, a list of Krusty Products and a complete character guide. Look for it this Halloween in bookstores everywhere.

TOO MUCH COFFEE, MAN

When you want a good cup of joe, just ask the pro—Too Much Coffee Man. He and his creator Shannon Wheeler are coming out with a limited-edition 1/2 pound bag of real coffee! Limited to 1,000 bags, you'll have to decide whether to drink the stuff or ferret it away in a vault somewhere. Regardless, the coffee retails for $12 and is available this October.

'Too Much Coffee' Bag

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

HEY! Are you a company putting out some super-groovy good fun in the form of comic-related merchandise like The Mummy's Home Embalming Kit, Green Goblin Pumpkin Water Bombs and Death's Carve Your Own Tombstone Set? If so, we'd love to include 'em in our equally super-groovy "Junk Drawer" column. (Of course, we'd also like statues, T-shirts, novelties, magnets, etc.) Please send all info and sample products to:

Junk Drawer
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920

JUNK DRAWER video games

By Steve Brown

A New Wave

Spawn. Iron Man. Spider-Man. The Hulk. The X-Men. Batman. Superman. They've all been made the subject of video games. Bad ones.

In most instances, comic book video games are poorly made throwaways. The majority of these games are tired 2-D fighting side-scrollers or shoot-'em-ups involving little or no skill, and a lot of jamming on the joystick.

Things may be changing, though, and changing real soon. It seems companies like GT Interactive, Sony, Acclaim and Eidos are moving away from the clichéd 2-D side-scrolling formula and making major league strides in the creation of solid comic book video games. With titles like *Spawn the Eternal, Youngblood, Fantastic Four* and *Batman & Robin* on the horizon, the future of superheroes in video games looks as bright as the glare from a 100-watt bulb.

These games have yet to hit the market, but from what we've seen so far, most (or all) of them could be solid hits, worthy of your purchase. The *Wizard* video game staff will keep you, as always, up to date on these and other comic book releases. In the meantime, here's a look at one superhero outing and a couple of horrific (pun intended) games…

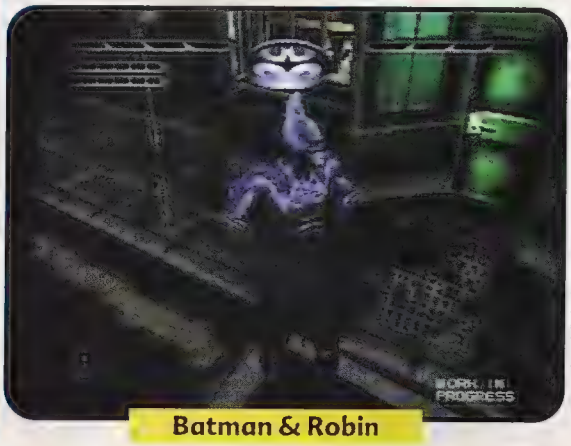
BATMAN & ROBIN

MANUFACTURER: Acclaim
PLATFORM: PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.99, available late October '97

Poor Acclaim. Even if *Batman & Robin* is a great video game, there's no way it could possibly overcome the pure lameness of this summer's biggest cinematic turkey.

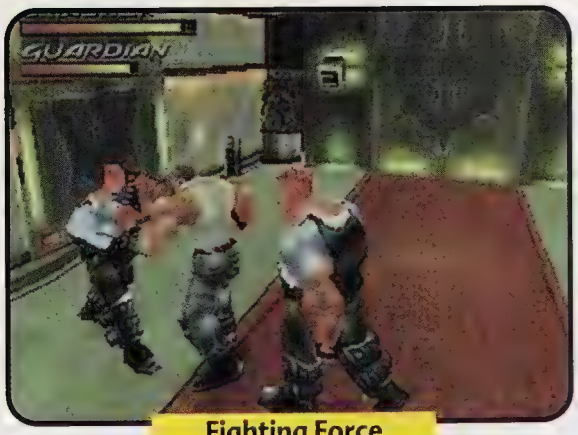
Batman & Robin is a third-person 3-D action/adventure game based on the aforementioned film. It's a one-player affair in which users can play as Batman, Robin or Batgirl (we'd like to have seen an Alfred option) and fight Mr. Freeze, Bane, Poison Ivy and waves and waves of anonymous henchmen. Each hero has his own particular strengths and weaknesses, and users can switch characters as the game progresses.

Graphically, *Batman & Robin* looks rock solid. All the major characters were motion captured, so they move, kick and punch like real people. The characters' faces are all digitized, too, so Batman and

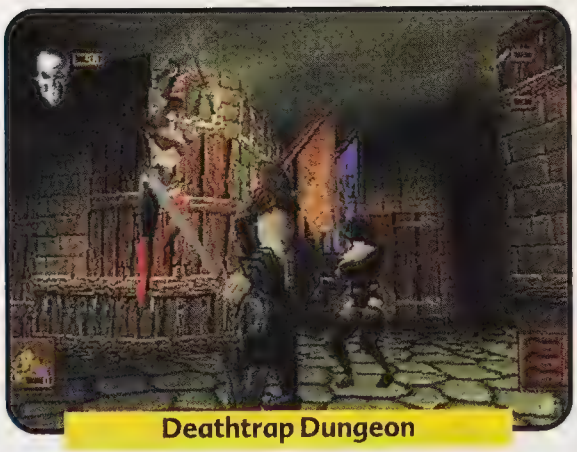


Batman & Robin

Batman, Robin and all related characters, names and indicia are trademarks of DC Comics © 1997.



Fighting Force


Deathtrap Dungeon

company all look like they did in the movie.

According to Acclaim, gameplay is split between investigative detective work, fighting/shooting and driving (chicks love the car). Users have the option of piloting five different vehicles from the Batmobile to Batgirl's Batcycle. And finally, an interesting new wrinkle is the addition of the Batcomputer, which players can use to decipher clues and browse Gotham City's Police criminal files.

FIGHTING FORCE

MANUFACTURER: Eidos
PLATFORM: PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.99, available now

An action/adventure 3-D fighting game, *Fighting Force* features characters designed by Top Cow comics artist Marc Silvestri.

This game looks great on the near-complete demo we tested. Gameplay-wise, *Fighting Force* allows players great freedom of movement and sports ultra-slick graphics, but has no soul whatsoever. All the game's development time was seemingly spent on trying to make this game *look* cool. Unfortunately, no one stopped and realized how dry the actual game is.

Fighting Force takes place in a 3-D environment consisting of seven levels and 30 different stages (a couple of which are awesome). In the tradition of the *Final Fight* series, players can find weapons littered throughout the gameplay area (fire hydrants and vending machines, for example, can be used against the game's enemies), and each character has 40 different moves. Users can play the game in solo mode, or team with a friend for cooperative play.

The problem is, the characters are just fighting-game clichés. Players get to choose from four tired, rehashed losers who seem to have appeared in every fighting video game. The game allows users to choose the big strong guy, the studly type guy, a young Asian woman and a hardened-by-adversity white female. There's no real storyline either, and players will have no emotional attachment to these bit-players. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for a player to immerse himself in the game. Of all *Fighting Force*'s flaws, its most fatal is its bad guys—most of whom are dull-looking, black-suited drones that are all identical to each other and come at you in endless waves.

DEATHTRAP DUNGEON

MANUFACTURER: Eidos
PLATFORM: PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.99, available now

Based on the multi-million-selling book series "Fighting Fantasy," by Ian Livingstone, *Deathtrap* continues the tradition of pure, straight-ahead action in an RPG-like setting made popular in the '80s with *Legend of Zelda*.

Users get to hack and slash through a third-person, fully 3-D macabre maze. Players choose to play as either a male or female hero and can collect charms, potions and spells to boost their strength and combat skills. In the quest to escape from the dungeon, a character can use a variety of weapons like swords, magic hammers, bombs and flame-throwers.

The game adds a new twist to the genre with a multiplayer option allowing more than one combatant in the dungeon at the same time. It's yet to be seen if Eidos can pull this feature off competently.

Deathtrap features over 50 different gorgeously rendered monsters and 10 enormous levels filled with orcs, dragons, hydras, dinosaurs, mummies, zombies, man-things and all sorts of slobbering nasties.

PLUG IN

The Latest in Video Game News

SUPERMAN FLIES TO N64

Superman is coming to the N64, courtesy of Titus. This game will be fully 3-D, and anything within the game's playing environment is usable as a weapon. Your goal is to safeguard a huge 3-D version of Metropolis, saving its citizens and foiling all sorts of evil plots. Titus hopes for a summer '98 release.

FANTASY BECOMES REALITY

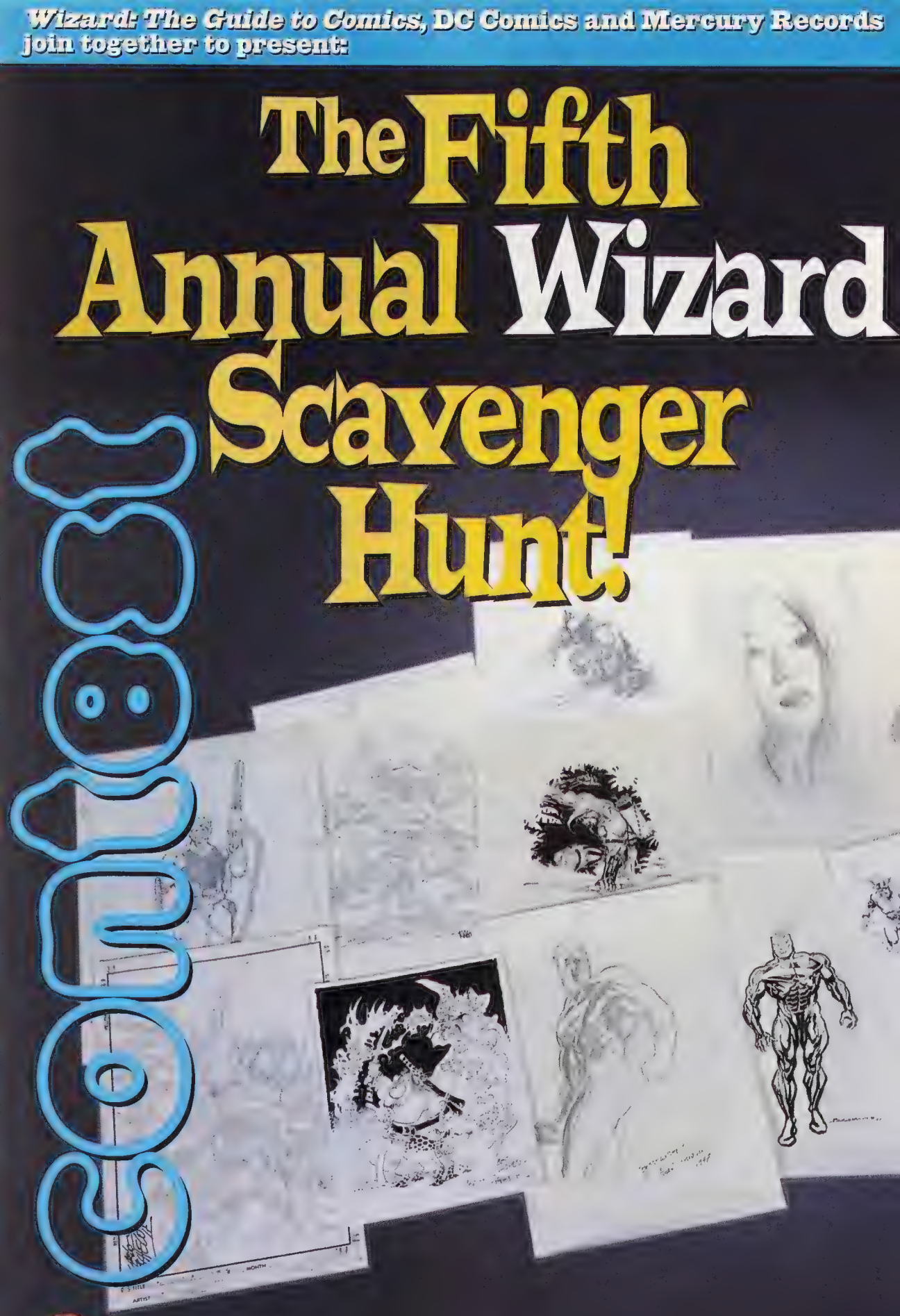
Final Fantasy VII is finally on its way for American PlayStations. The controversial RPG game (which featured profanity and nudity in the original Japanese edition) sold $125 million worth of PlayStation software in Japan...in only three days! Japanese gamers are calling it the most revolutionary game ever. They might be right.

QUAKE FOR CHRISTMAS

Quake 64 is tentatively scheduled for a Christmas '97 release, and the people programming the N64 version are saying the N64 *Quake* may be better than the original computer version. Basically a juiced-up *DOOM*, *Quake* (with its frenzied shooting action and multiplayer play) could become the crown jewel of the N64.

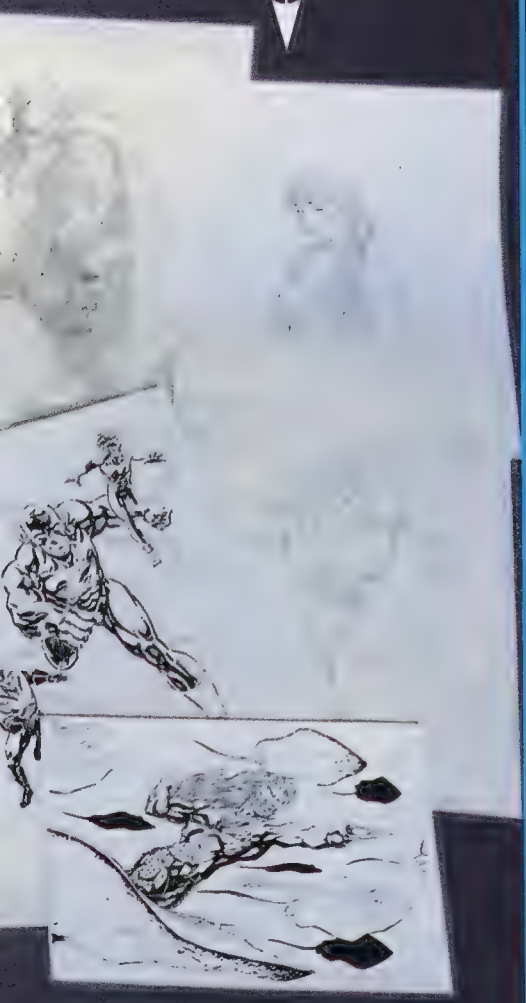
Wizard: The Guide to Comics, DC Comics and Mercury Records join together to present:

The Fifth Annual Wizard Scavenger Hunt!

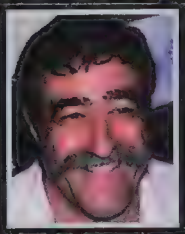


Grand Prize (1):

One and only one Scavenger will win a virtual treasure chest of comic book artwork—20 pieces of original art! These pieces have been generously donated by the talented folks to the right—and as you can see, they're all top-notchers!



TAKE HOME THEIR ART



Sergio Aragonés
MAD magazine illustrator, *Groo* creator and Reuben Award Winner 1997

Chris Bachalo
artist on *Uncanny X-Men*

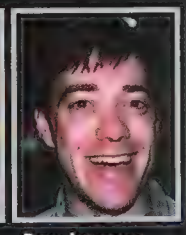
Jim Balent
man most commonly associated with *Catwoman* and *Purgatori*

Jon Bogdanove
penciler of *Superman: Man of Steel*

Jim Calafiore
artist of DC's *Aquaman*

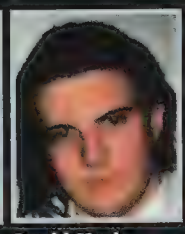
Steven Hughes
Chaos! co-founder and *Lady Death* artist

Stuart Immonen
Artist of DC's *Adventures of Superman*



Dan Jurgens
Teen Titans writer/artist and Super-guy extraordinaire

Andy Kubert
penciler of Marvel's *Ka-Zar*



David Mack
creator of *Kabuki*, now published by Image Comics

Terry Moore
Strangers in Paradise creator

Carlos Pacheco
artist on the ever-popular *X-Men*

Jimmy Palmiotti
Event Comics' co-founder and inker of just about everything

Brandon Peterson
creator of Top Cow's *Arcanum*

Adam Pollina
artist of *X-Force* fame

Howard Porter
that guy who helped make the JLA famous

Randy Queen
creator of *Darkchylde* and schmeggenheimie dancer

John Romita, Jr.
artist of *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* and Marvel's upcoming re-launch of *Thor*

Paul Ryan
DC artist of *Flash* and *Superman: Man of Tomorrow*

Mike Wieringo
Sensational Spider-Man penciler and, quite possibly, the second nicest man in comic books

Runners-Up (100):

And even if you're not the Great Gazoo of all winners, 100 runners-up will receive the following package of assorted goodies:

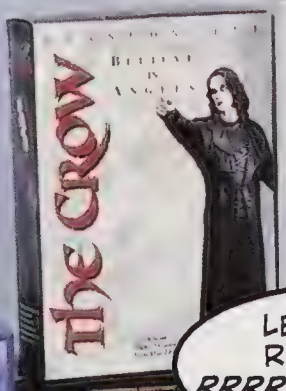
- a *Lois & Clark* trade paperback from DC
- a Mercury records CD
- a *Wizard* Chicago ComiCon Staff T-shirt (Ya won't find that anywhere else!)
- two assorted, reeeally cool autographed comic books
- one Rembrandt Ultra-Pro comic board combo
- a full set of *Wizard* chromium cards
- an Angela decal
- a Nightwing chromium tri-card, signed by Chuck Dixon
- a copy of *Ash* #1/2, signed by Joe Quesada & Jimmy Palmiotti
- a surprise *Wizard* ACE Edition

The Randomizer (10):

Ten lucky Scavengers chosen completely at random will receive either a porcelain statue or vinyl model kit from among these exciting characters: Green Lantern, Smiley Bone, Lady Death, Red Elektra, Evil Ernie, Witchblade, War, Arzach, the Crow and the Alien (Yes, *that* Alien!).

Sponsored by DC Comics, Rembrandt and Mercury Records.

Special thanks to Bowen Designs, Graphitti Designs, Dark Horse Comics, Creative License and Inteleg for all the neat statues and model kits!



WANT THE PRIZES?
HERE'S HOW TO ENTER!

You'll find a list of 75 different items to find and questions to answer. Each item and question is worth a specific point value. Find the items, answer the questions, bundle them up (All in the same box!) and send it in! The top point total wins, and all ties will be decided by random drawing. And make sure to use the official *Wizard* Scavenger Hunt Checklist (or a photocopy of a buddy's, if you're cheap) provided for you in the polybag of this issue. It's worth five points just to use it!

Items and Points

1) a Lincoln Log (2)
2) sushi menu (3)
3) little Playmobil guy (3)
4) Joker from a deck of cards (2)
5) any "Dukes of Hazzard" merchandise (4)
6) guitar pick (2)
7) Wacky Packages sticker card (5)
8) Fun Dip wrapper (4)
9) *Wizard* logo (2)
10) Underoos! (10)
11) picture of yourself in front of a sign that says "No Dumping" (7)
12) magnet from a country other than the United States (3)
13) old key to your house (2)
14) one of those juice bottle caps with a witty saying on the inside (2)
15) menu from a restaurant that serves blood pudding, escargot, haggis or shepherd's pie (6)
16) scented candle (Don't ask!) (3)
17) something with Yoda on it (3)
18) rejection letter of any kind (3)
19) Elmo (7)
20) comic with either Captain America or Iron Man in it (3)
21) purple piece of lint (2)
22) random action figure accessory (2)
23) a piece of Denver Broncos paraphernalia (6)
24) photo of a personalized license plate (5)
25) blank congratulations card (2)
26) Lego man (4)
27) pen with a company name on it (2)
28) die with more or less than six sides (4)
29) Star Wars toy (5)
30) atomic fireball (2)
31) picture of Winona Ryder (4)
32) a 3 3/4-inch G.I. Joe figure (7)
33) something with a rabbit on it (2)
34) anything dealing with Smurfs (4)
35) head of any action figure (4)
36) business card with the word "toilet" in it (6)
37) map of a small town (3)
38) anything with the three-eyed "Toy Story" alien on it (5)
39) weirdest Website address you've found (2)
40) Taco Bell napkin (3)
41) any 1970s comic book that begins with the word "Marvel" (4)
42) the Allman Bros. logo (8)
43) photo of Animal from "The Muppet Show" (7)
44) a whistle (3)
45) "Dilbert" comic strip (3)
46) mousepad (3)
47) any "X-Files" merchandise (4)
48) receipt from your local comic book store (2)
49) proof of a higher power (5)
50) a Matchbox or Hot Wheels car (5)
51) any *ROM: Spaceknight* comic book (3)
52) pair of cheap sunglasses (2)
53) plastic sword used to skewer fruit in mixed drinks (2)
54) Pittsburgh Pirates baseball card (3)
55) fly swatter (3)
56) copy of a high school yearbook photo of someone with a cheesy mustache (4)
57) any Vertigo comic book (5)
58) VHS tape (4)
59) picture of Charlie Chaplin (6)
60) any non-superhero Pez dispenser (4)
61) coloring book (2)
62) plastic farm animal (2)
63) super bouncing ball (3)
64) any superhero merchandise (5)
65) used movie ticket (2)
66) a red tab from a pair of Levi's (4)
67) TDK side B cassette sticker (3)
68) yo-yo (4)
69) any Calvin Klein ad showing Kate Moss or Christy Turlington (7)
70) Your *Wizard* Scavenger Hunt Checklist, filled out and ready for action (5)

Questions and Points

71) In which Steve Martin movie does Martin say the word "amalgam"? (5)
72) What were the words to the end-theme of the original "Land of the Lost"? (5)
73) What "Empire Strikes Back" character also hails from Chewbacca's home planet? (5)
74) Who created Namor, the Sub-Mariner? (5)
75) Who are the members of Captain Carrot's Amazing Zoo Crew? (5)

Legal Doings

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, DC Comics, Rembrandt, Mercury Records, their immediate families and that puppet from "The Dark Crystal" that kept taking her eye out of her head. That was Jim Henson's dark side come to life. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the Scavenger Hunt Checklist card or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your Scavenger Hunt entry. Enter as many times as you like. Each entry must be mailed in a single, secured package or envelope. Each package will be considered a separate entry. Small items such as a tooth or business card should be taped to an index card to avoid loss during shipping. All Scavenger Hunt questions must be answered on the Scavenger Hunt Checklist card or on a single, separate sheet of paper. Mail each entry separately to: Wizard Scavenger Hunt V, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Egg farts are the worst. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by December 31, 1997.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press based on greatest point total with random drawing breaking all ties. The drawing, if necessary, will take place on or about January 15, 1997.

For a list of winners, available after January 15, 1997, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: *Wizard* Scavenger Hunt V Winners List, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Deadline is December 31, 1997.

That gives you to the end of the year, bub.

Important Do's and Don'ts

DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 31, 1997!

1. Use one package and one package only to send in your entry! If you send more than one, we'll count each as separate entries and you'll never win!
2. Use the official checklist provided in the polybag. It's worth five points just to fill it out! And believe you us—you'll need them extra points!
3. Unless otherwise noted, send only one item for each numbered entry! It's IMPOSSIBLE to score extra points by sending multiples!
4. Send your entry to: **Scavenger Hunt V**
   c/o Wizard Press
   151 Wells Ave.
   Congers, NY 10920

THE TOY CHEST

BY TOM PALMER JR.

SPAWN INVADES JAPAN!

Not content to just have a top-selling comic in America, Todd McFarlane has set his sights on...Japan! The monthly *Spawn* comic is already a big hit there, so naturally manga-inspired action figures are on the way from McFarlane Toys this fall. In addition to Manga Spawn, Spawn Series 9 will include Manga Ninja Spawn, Manga Clown, Manga Violator, Manga Curse and the Goddess (a.k.a. Manga Angela). Taking a cue from popular import toys and model kits like the cool-looking Evangellion and Mobile Suit Gundam, these figures sport tons of sleek armor and multi-point articulation. Word has it that some of the other Spawn toys planned for early '98 will have a manga-feel, so be sure to grab this latest Spawn line before it disappears from toy shelves everywhere.

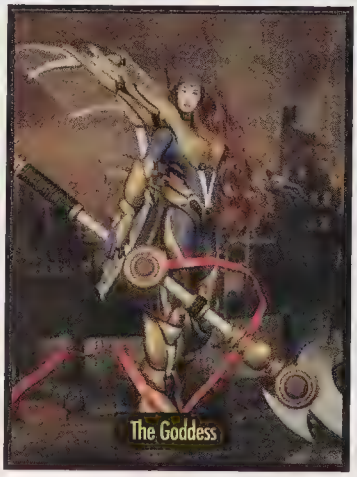
In other Spawn news, McFarlane Toys has offered a plethora of exclusives lately. In a regional exclusive available at retail chains like Ames and Thrifty Payless Drug Stores, evil vampire Sansker now sports a human head and arms, instead of his usual snake ones. Kay-Bee is the place to pick up a 13-inch Medieval Spawn and gold Angela. A repainted Vertebreaker is on the way from J.C. Penney, sporting a red paint deco, a new jaw and a stand to pose him on. The McFarlane Toys Collector's Club also has quite a few exclusives. Call 1-888-99-SPAWN to sign up and learn how to get an exclusive pewter Angela, "Heavenly Fire" Angela (made from clear blue plastic) and a see-through green Necroplasm Spawn.

Manga Violator

Manga Clown

Manga Curse

Manga Ninja Spawn


The Goddess

Manga Spawn

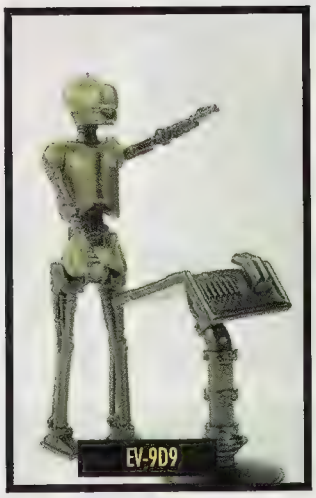
STAR WARS UPDATE

It's been a banner year for Star Wars figures. Fans have snapped up never-done-before figures like Grand Moff Tarkin and Garindan (that long-nosed Imperial spy), as well as dynamic new versions of the Emperor and Admiral Ackbar, and the line is well on its way to surpassing Kenner's original Star Wars line. Kenner recently released photos of some of its final offerings for this year. In the 3 3/4-inch line, check out a bunch of weird creatures from "Return of the Jedi" in toy stores this October: Lando's co-pilot Nien Nunb, Joe Camel-wannabe Yak Face (Saelt-Marae to his friends), Jabba's baddie-droid EV-9D9, a Gamorrean Guard and Malakili the Rancor Keeper.

Exclusives are the name of the game for the 12-inch Collector Series. You'll have to shop at J.C. Penney to pick up the exclusive 12-inch version of Greedo, and an Electronic Power F/X Obi-Wan Kenobi vs. Darth Vader two-pack, both in September.

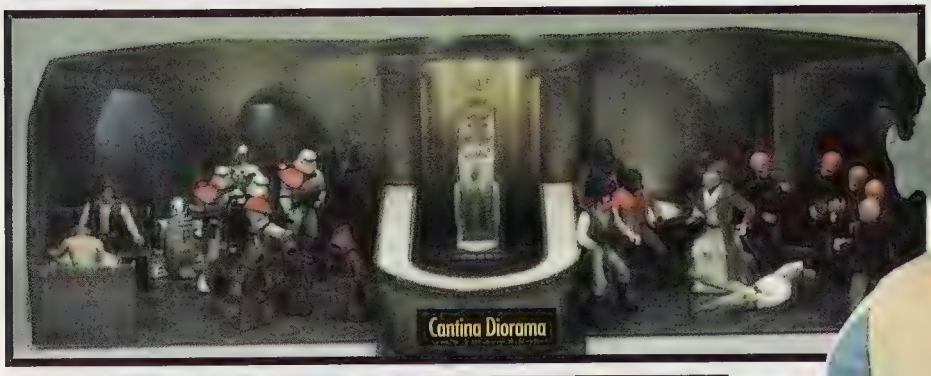
For all of you who missed out on the Mos Eisley Cantina playset, worry no more. Until now, you had to be one of the lucky few who got an exclusive coupon with your Spirit of Obi-Wan figure to snag this extra-nifty cardboard diorama. Now, Kenner will make it available through its official Star Wars fan club newsletter *Star Wars Insider*. If you're not already a member, call 1-800-TRUE-FAN to sign up.

Yak Face


EV-9D9

Nien Nunb

Malakili


Cantina Diorama

Electronic Power F/X Obi-Wan Kenobi vs. Darth Vader

12-inch Greedo

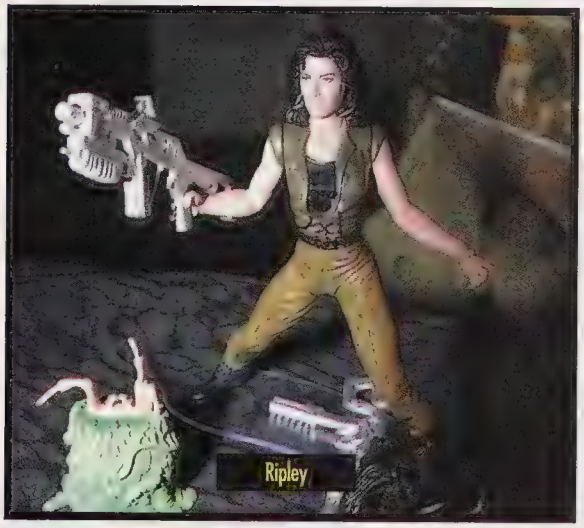
ALIENS RESURRECTED

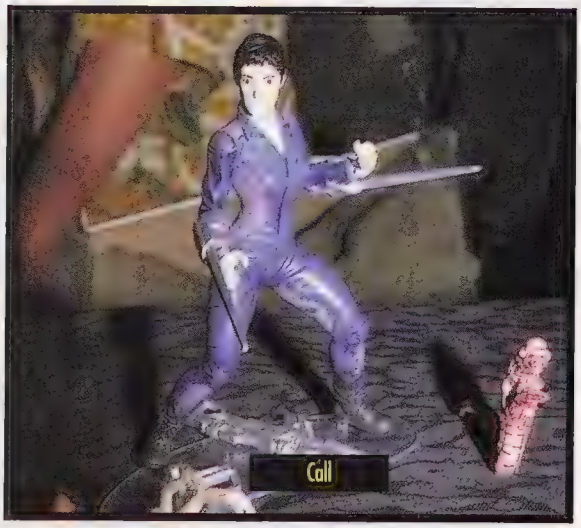
Sigourney Weaver gets down and dirty for some hot Alien-lovin' on the big screen this fall in "Alien Resurrection," and Kenner's already got a line of action figures planned for November release. In a bold move, Kenner has decided to aim this line to collectors. With elaborate sculpting and a larger size, these figures are designed to capture all of the ferocious details of the H.R. Giger-designed creatures. Look for the line to include Weaver as Ripley, Call (the android character played by Winona Ryder), Alien Warrior, Aqua Alien and Battle Scar Alien. The line will be rounded out by a top-secret fourth Alien that plays a key role in the film.

Alien Warrior

Aqua Alien

Battle Scar Alien


Ripley


Call

SURFER, DUDE!

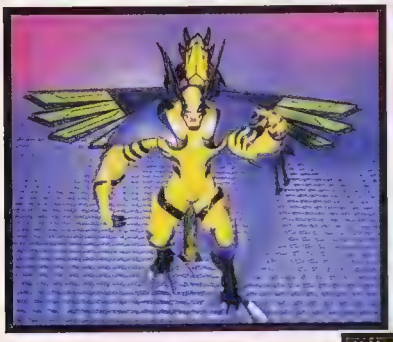
It's birthday time for the Silver Surfer, and Marvel's got quite a party cooked up. Not only is the cosmic soaring hero getting his own animated series, but Toy Biz has three toy lines planned. In September, look for a 6-inch Classic Silver Surfer line, which features a Surfer figure closely patterned after Jack Kirby's distinctive take on the character. The assortment also features a Meegan Alien, Galactus' herald Nova and Beta Ray Bill. There will also be a 10-inch version of the Surfer, complete with clip-on energy bolts and the Infinity Gauntlet. A third "animated" line is planned for next year in conjunction with the animated series.

Also from the Biz in September is X-Men Missile Flyers. When Apocalypse builds a floating sky fortress, the X-Men strap on Jet Wings to stop him. This line includes Cable, Apocalypse, Wolverine, Bishop and Shard, and each figure features detachable projectile-firing winged backpacks.

Toy Biz has been taking advantage of its advances in dynamic sculpting to redo a lot of popular characters in recent assortments. The new Spider-Man Web Wars line is no exception. It features two versions of Spidey (Web-Commando Spidey and Web Swamp Spidey), as well as resculpted Lizard, Vulture and Daredevil figures.

10-inch Silver Surfer

Silver Surfer 6-inch line (from left): Meegan Alien, Nova, Silver Surfer and Beta Ray Bill



X-Men Missile Flyers (from left): Wolverine, Bishop and Apocalypse

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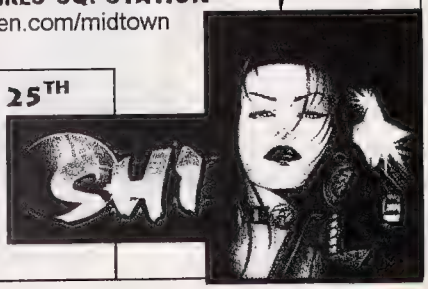
SIGNING SHI: HEAVEN & EARTH #2



ACCLAIM SIGNS WITH SKYBOLT

Acclaim Comics President and Publisher Fabian Nicieza has confirmed that Skybolt Toyz has acquired the rights to make action figures of popular Valiant heroes X-O Manowar and Solar, Man of the Atom. These two heroes, sporting their latest costumes, will hit all comic and hobby stores in the summer of 1998. Each case of figures will include a special chase figure, and there'll also be an extra-special collector's edition of each hero. Tentative plans also call for classic costume versions of the characters in '99, in conjunction with a top secret story for Acclaim's Valiant Heroes line.

Look for Solar (above left) and X-O next summer.

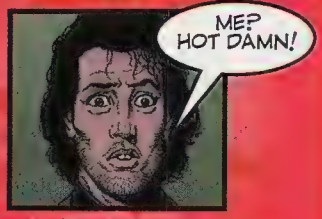
KULL ROCKS!

Kevin Sorbo, TV's Hercules, dyes his hair black and jumps to the big screen to portray one of author Robert E. Howard's creations in "Kull the Conqueror." Kull's a barbarian soldier who rises from the ranks to become king, only to discover that it ain't so good to be the king. Toy Biz has a line of action figures that includes Kull the Conqueror, the evil bad guy Talagaro and King Kull. Each figure comes with a ton o' armor, swords and other sharp objects, and has rooted hair—a first for Toy Biz 5-inch figures. Look for this gang of bad-asses in September.

Kull the Conqueror

SCARY WISH LIST

THE 10 FIGURES THAT *WIZARD* WANTS TO SEE MADE



1) Preacher (Vertigo)
Jesse Custer, star of Vertigo's mega-popular *Preacher*, is prime material for an action figure. Toss in light-up eyes and a recording voice chip, so he can use "The Word" to get what he wants.

2) Hellboy (Legend)
Mike Mignola's paranormal investigator would be a nifty addition to anyone's monster figure collection. He'd come with a power-punch arm, gun and holster, and really furry legs.

3) Scream (McFarlane Toys)
Who cares about washed-up losers like Freddy Krueger or Jason? The killer from the recent horror blockbuster "Scream" is where it's at. This figure would have a removable mask, bloody knife and a big, flowing cloth cape.

4) Man-Thing (Marvel Heroes)
With Marvel starting an all-new monthly *Man-Thing* comic in October, now's the perfect time for ol' Manny to get his own action figure! Just make sure he towers over the rest of the Marvel figures and comes with a jar of authentic swamp slime. Yum!

5) Corinthian (Vertigo)
Only die-hard *Sandman* fans will remember this psycho serial killer. With removable sunglasses and rows and rows of tiny teeth in each eye-socket, we'd be crappin' our shorts for weeks!

6) Creature from the Black Lagoon (Universal)
Alla them classic monsters are getting action figures lately, so where's the Creature? We demand that this figure be super-scaly and super-poseable so he can look all creepy and stuff.

7) Buffy the Vampire Slayer (M.A.C.)
Based on the WB TV show, Buffy'd come equipped with a mallet and a bunch of stakes to complement her stake-driving action feature.

8) John Constantine (Vertigo)
Star of Vertigo's *Hellblazer*, the dark-magic wielding Constantine would come with a removable trench coat and a li'l pack of cigarettes.

9) Neron (DC Heroes)
DC's version o' Satan would come with snap-on soul-destroying force blasts and a throne base designed like it was made from the fires of Hell itself.

10) Werewolf by Night (Marvel Heroes)
With tons of werewolf figures out nowadays, somebody's gotta make this guy! Give him light-up eyes and a cool howling voice chip, and alla them dopey heroes would be running for the hills.

Hey! Keep sending them Top 10 lists! You've already made a difference! Drop us a note with your "dream figures" at:

Toy Wish List
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920

Or e-mail us at:
WizardTGTC@aol.com

TOY BITES

• Diamond Comics Distributors has announced a whole mess of exclusive action figures and figure sets. In October, you can pick up the Batman "Rogues Gallery" Action Figure Boxed Set, a set of Animated Series action figures in a special tri-fold display box designed to resemble a maximum security prison. The set will be limited to 12,000 numbered boxes and includes the Joker, Catwoman, Poison Ivy, Killer Croc, Scarecrow, Man-Bat, Phantasm and Clayface. Diamond is also teaming-up with Exclusive Toy Products Inc. and Toys R Us to bring Babylon 5 figures to rabid fans. The Minbari Lennier, Ranger Marcus Cole and the Centauri Vir will be offered to comic stores in October, before the rest of the 9-inch line debuts at Toys R Us next year.

• Rob Liefeld's Prophet action figure has finally hit comic stores. After months of delay, Awesome Toys is up and running. Prophet was released in August and Shaft is on the way for December. Future offerings could include Glory, Fighting American and Supreme.

• G.I. Joe is back! Toys R Us will begin offering re-decoed sets of Hasbro's 3 3/4-inch G.I. Joe Real American Hero in October and November. Old favorites like Duke, Torpedo, Snake Eyes, Snow Job, Storm Shadow and others will be available in sets that include the Army Recon Team, Navy SEAL Team and Covert Commando Team. There will also be repainted versions of familiar vehicles like the Slugger Cannon and Thunderbolt, and the original eight Joes will be available in a special Stars and Stripes Forever set that recreates the historic flag-planting at Iwo Jima. W

ToyFare *Assistant Editor Tom Palmer Jr. used to have rooted hair, but it all fell out after years of using cheap shampoos and conditioners.*

HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.

GRAND PRIZE

All of the following figures were made from plain old, ordinary figures and household materials. The talented Grand Prize Winner soars away with three DC statues from Comic Book Champions: Batman, Robin and Mr. Freeze! The Runner-Up scores two of the above statues, while everyone else gets one of 'em! Outstanding work, folks!

A hearty thanks to the Comic Book Champions people for the super prizes!

COMIC BOOK CHAMPIONS™

X-FILES (SCULLY, MULDER & SKINNER)
Dan Myers of Philadelphia, Pa.
Dan beamed out these stunning X-Files figures by repainting a handful of Playmates' Star Trek: The Next Generation figures, including Ship's Counselor Deanna Troi, Lt. Commander Data and Captain Jean-Luc Picard, respectively.

RUNNER-UP

MARTIAN MANHUNTER
E. R. Hunter of Spokane, Wash.
Good ol' J'onn J'onzz (pronounced like "John Jones," in case you were wondering) is a combination of a Toy Biz Hercules Iolaus figure's body, a resin cast of the original Kenner Super Powers Martian Manhunter head, a Playmates WildC.A.T.s Helspont cape and some styrene for the boots and collar.

KISS

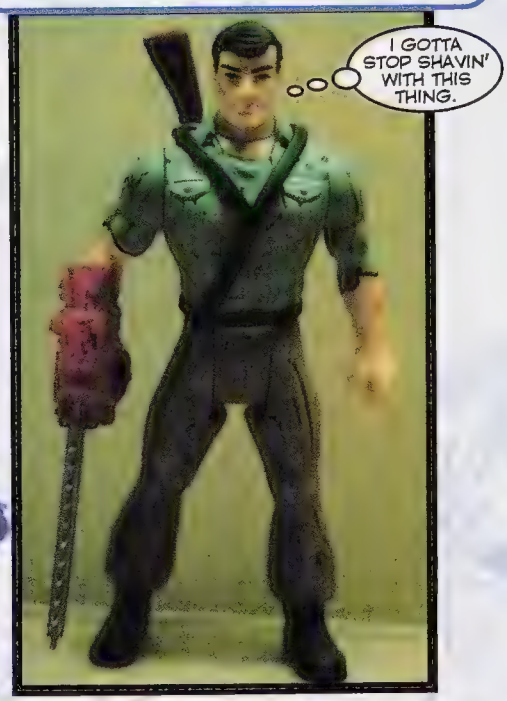
Julio L. Martinez Jr. of Corpus Christi, Texas

Sure, McFarlane Toys has KISS figures, but these are 12-inch KISS figures. After Julio doctored up the U.S. Serviceman Collection with fabric, paint, glitter, glue, clay, etc., they actually stand 12 1/2 inches tall with their platform heels. Gene Simmons would be proud.

ASH FROM "ARMY OF DARKNESS"

Jeff Watson of East Liverpool, Ohio

Repainting a Tyco Cadillacs & Dinosaurs Vice Terhune and touching it up with some Hasbro G.I. Joe pant legs and some spot putty, Ash is ready to take on some zombies in an S-Mart way.



NINJAK

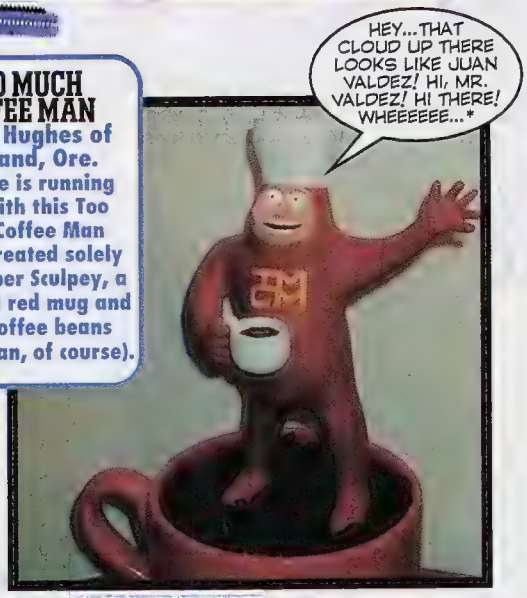
Jeff Baldridge of Chatsworth, Ga.

"By the power of Ninjak," Jeff called together the legs off a McFarlane's Spawn, the head from a Toy Biz X-Men Morph and the body stripped from a Toy Biz X-Men Magneto to create this cool Valiant—ahem, we mean Acclaim character.

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN

Shahu Hughes of Portland, Ore.

Caffeine is running wild with this Too Much Coffee Man figure created solely from Super Sculpey, a beautiful red mug and some coffee beans (Colombian, of course).



HEY!

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send well-lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in a cool or funny pose!), along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, and your full phone number (including area code) to:

HOMEMADE HEROES
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Randy Queen and Image Comics Present:

Draw a Cover of Darkchylde!

It's Halloween, people, which means one thing and one thing only: Randy Queen's out trick or treating when he should be working on the next issue of *Darkchylde*! This guy needs help with his artistic chores in the worst possible way! Think you're up to helping out?

The Trick: Randy's busy stuffing his face full of candy corn, which means he hasn't completed the sketch for his next cover yet. So he needs you to draw it! Yup, just sketch out whatever *you* think would make a nice *Darkchylde* cover on an 8" X 10" piece of paper and mail it in!

The Treats:

Grand Prize (1): The Grand Prize winner will have his or her cover sketch used as the template for a cover of an upcoming issue of *Darkchylde*! Yes, he'll even receive credit on the cover! Plus, he'll win a Darkchylde poster, a Darkchylde Diary lithograph from Dynamic Forces, a signed *Darkchylde Diary Bikini Edition* and a complete set of *Darkchylde* comics, signed by the main man himself—Randy Queen!

Second Prize (5): Five Second Prize winners will receive a Darkchylde poster and a full set of *Darkchylde* comics, autographed by Randy Queen!

This month's contest is sponsored by Randy Queen and Image Comics.

Dark Side of the Law

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Image Comics, their immediate families and whoever points out that Darkchylde is spelled wrong. You just don't get it. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Darkchylde Cover Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Dat 'a Darkchylde...she's 'a one spicy meatball! Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by November 28, 1997.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on originality and creativity from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Winning entries will be selected on or about December 15, 1997.

For a list of winners, available after December 15, 1997, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Darkchylde Cover Winners List, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Fill this out, attach your entry and put it in an envelope. Send to: Darkchylde Cover Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Deadline is November 28, 1997.

Draw a Cover of Darkchylde Form

DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 28 1997!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

THE SKINNY

Comic book REVIEWS from the *Wizard* Editors

THE SCORING

6 THE BEST · 5 EXCELLENT · 4 GOOD · 3 SO-SO · 2 UGH · 1 CRAPOLA

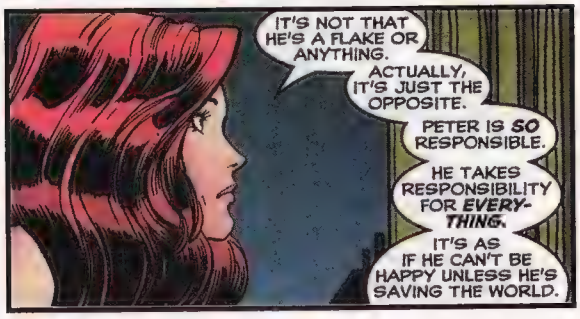
PETER PARKER: SPIDER-MAN

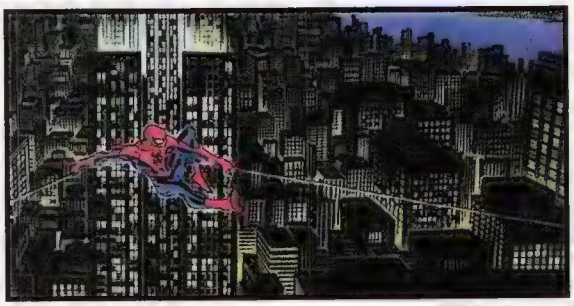
Is Spidey still caught in a web?

Issues Reviewed: #77-#83
Genre: Superhero action/adventure
Publisher: Marvel Comics
Creative Team: Howard Mackie, John Romita Jr. and Scott Hanna
Price/Frequency: $1.99/Monthly

What You Need to Know: As a high school student, Peter Parker was bitten by a radioactive spider, gained incredible spider-like powers and became the costumed crimefighter Spider-Man. Now married to former model Mary Jane Watson, Peter continues fighting crime while also working as a freelance photographer for the *Daily Bugle*.

The Good: *Peter Parker*'s creative team does a pretty good job with the ball it's been handed, specifically the fact that Spidey's married to Mary Jane (a move which took away the enjoyable romantic problems for Peter). But it's nice to see in *Peter Parker* that being Spider-Man creates believable relationship problems for Peter *and* Mary Jane, so much so they actually visit a marriage counselor. Spidey works best when he's got all sorts of problems—school, girls, work, etc.—and thankfully, in *Peter Parker*, he's got 'em again.





It's also nice to see Spidey's witty banter. Following the universally panned "Clone Saga," every Spidey writer seemed to force humor to make Spidey fun again, but *Peter Parker* nicely balances the seriousness and lightheartedness.

The art makes Spider-Man look fantastic—dynamic and graceful. It also conveys New York extremely well and the Empire State University campus looks realistic. (On that note, both the story and art capture the college campus feeling quite well, now that Peter and Mary Jane are attending ESU.)

Also, this series does a real good job of recapping recent events inside the actual story, so newcomers'll have no trouble jumping right in.

The Bad: While there are some interesting storylines, there's way too many. There's Betty Brant's new role as an investigative reporter, the Friends of Humanity on campus, the new superhero S.H.O.C., Morbius biting Spidey, the Mafia gang war, etc. All the various plots and subplots hit at roughly the same time, leaving no one plot to dominate the others. More story structure with a beginning, middle and end is needed.

Some of the plots just drag on, particularly the Morbius storyline. What could've been a simple vampire storyline turned into a huge Mafia war involving HYDRA. Then there are the Stacys, relatives of Peter Parker's late girlfriend Gwen. Paul Stacy is angry at Spider-Man for the death of his brother and niece. Sure, dragging up stuff from Spidey's past can sometimes make for good stories, but these characters are a tedious distraction and their plot is going nowhere.

The Buzz: Unfortunately, there ain't any. Ever since Spidey's "Clone Saga," people really aren't buying Spider-Man like they used to.

The Skinny: After a rocky road, *Peter Parker* has put Spidey back on the right track. Unfortunately, the lack of structured stories with a beginning and resolution make this book somewhat unfocused.

In Peter Parker, *Spidey and NYC never looked better.*

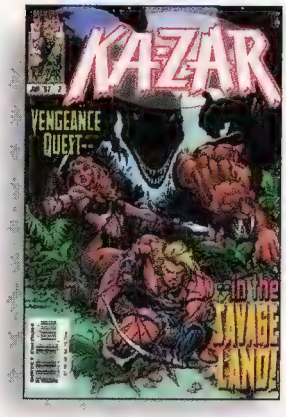
Peter Parker *shows that being Spider-Man can cause problems for Peter AND Mary Jane, as evidenced by them seeing a marriage counselor (as shown here).*

The Verdict: 4 GOOD

KA-ZAR

A savagely enjoyable read

Issues Reviewed: #1-#6
Genre: Superhero action/adventure
Publisher: Marvel Comics
Creative Team: Mark Waid, Andy Kubert and Jesse Delperdang
Price/Frequency: $1.99/Monthly



What You Need to Know: Lord Kevin Plunder is Ka-Zar, the protector of the Savage Land, a secret prehistoric world hidden in the heart of Antarctica. He resides there with his wife Shanna, their infant son Matthew and his saber-toothed tiger Zabu.

The Good: After warming the bench for third-string heroes, Ka-Zar's finally a character readers can care about. The relationship between the Plunders is quite believable, particularly when they squabble over philosophical differences. Shanna wants no sign of technology in her home, while Ka-Zar sneaks CD players around because he still enjoys society's funky toys. This tug of war between the two is an enjoyable underlying theme. Also, Ka-Zar's relationship with Zabu is more than just a boy and his dog—it's a man and his best friend. Zabu acts as his pal and weapon, protecting Ka-Zar and his family at all costs.

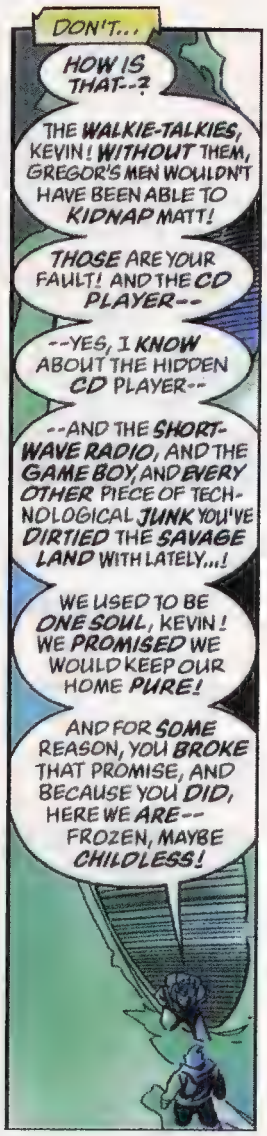
Ka-Zar is a fun book, and the lighthearted approach makes the book easy to get into. And even Ka-Zar gets in on the fun. While attending a gala event, he does his best Tarzan impression, eating with his hands and warning Zabu to avoid an ice sculpture because, "Strange beast is cold to Ka-Zar's touch!" Behind closed doors, however, he and Shanna laugh it up at his "act."

The art is fantastic—it's dynamic, energetic and fluid. The jungle scenes with dinosaurs are so neat that it's disappointing when Ka-Zar heads to the cityscape of Manhattan for a few issues. But all the accurate NYC references—particularly the cool blue whale at the Museum of Natural History—make up for it.

The Bad: While they don't really hinder the plot, there are a number of nagging little problems with *Ka-Zar*. Sometimes the series gets a bit too silly, like when Shanna brings Zabu, tropical plants and even dinosaurs into a high-rise Manhattan hotel room. And then there's the fact that Ka-Zar supposedly witnessed his brother Parnival's death back in the 1980s *Ka-Zar* series. It was retroactively explained that one of Parnival's flunkies had actually died, which seems a bit forced.

And speaking of Parnival, not until Ka-Zar tossed him out of a building did Parny start freaking out with a massive germ phobia—which came out of nowhere.

Also, it seems pretty ridiculous that a universe conqueror like Thanos would choose to rely on someone so trivial as Parnival. But to be fair, their relationship hasn't been revealed yet, so hopefully there'll be a great explanation.



The Buzz: Two hot creators equal one hot book. Fans are already hip to this series, thanks to Waid and Kubert's high-profile name power and the obvious quality they bring to the book.

The Skinny: Barring minor problems, *Ka-Zar* is an energetic, action-packed book. We didn't think it possible, but Ka-Zar's finally stepped up to prove he's more than just a third-rate guest star.

The most interesting aspect of Ka-Zar is Ka-Zar's deteriorating relationship with Shanna.

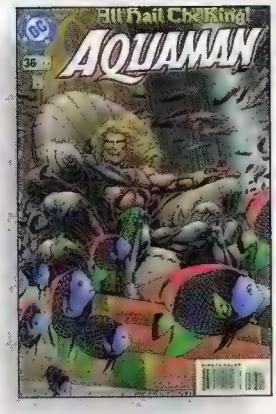
The art makes the most of Ka-Zar's jungle setting.

The Verdict: 5 EXCELLENT

AQUAMAN

Greatness gets lost in murky depths

Issues Reviewed: #29-#36
Genre: Superhero action/adventure
Publisher: DC Comics
Creative Team: Peter David, Marty Egeland, Jim Calafiore, H. Shum and P.L. Palmiotti
Price/Frequency: $1.95/Monthly



What You Need to Know: Arthur "Orin" Curry is Aquaman, king of Atlantis and the oceans, who is trying to come to terms with his heritage and responsibilities as king. He has the power to control sea life and his left hand has been replaced with a cybernetically controlled harpoon.

The Good: *Aquaman* is a rich book of history, politics and undersea environments. Arthur is the latest king in the centuries-old history for Atlantis, and this book makes a person believe it exists in an ocean that's a world all its own. When a mysterious chasm is discovered, Aquaman is questioned in issue #29 as to how he didn't know about it, and replies that the ocean is three times as vast as the land. At that point, the potential for the series is summed up.

The art is superb and does an excellent job bringing the underwater environment to the reader. Characters' movements always reflect the fact that they are floating in water, and the meticulous detail given to fish, plant life and structures is impressive.

The book is also philosophical. Aquaman struggles with being king. It gets behind the philosophies of leadership without getting preachy to the reader. In the end, readers will find Aquaman likable, forceful and believable as a king (in a past issue, he threatens Japan itself, and comes out on top).

The supporting cast is enjoyable as well. His girlfriend Dolphin and Tempest (formerly his sidekick, Aqualad) are interesting, and even the different kinds of sea life become distinctive personalities.

The Bad: Much of the rich history and activity in this book has no explanation to it, which makes the book very reader unfriendly. Those who haven't read the series from issue #1 will ask unanswered questions: Why exactly were the Poseidonians enslaved by the Tritonians? Why's Aquaman called Orin sometimes? Why is Poseidonis atop a huge, skull-shaped rock? With so much activity going on, the fact that the book doesn't have a "What's happened before?" box is surprising.

Guest stars are usually handled well in the book, but rarely seem to go with the flow of the title. Issue #35 guest-starring Animal Man is a particular example, where if a person skipped the whole issue he would still have the main storyline basically intact.

The Buzz: Peter David is a hot writer, and Aquaman's involvement in *JLA* is bringing a lot of attention to the book. At first, the character's new attitude and powers were questioned by fans, who have since accepted and appreciated them.

The Skinny: The richness of the environment is brought to life with so little backstory that, instead of being wondrous, the book ends up being confusing.

The detail in Aquaman *is amazing. (And who thought an ocean-based book could look so interesting?)*

In a book with precious few of them, this quick recap leaves us more confused than ever by not explaining anything further.

The Verdict: 4 GOOD

LEAVE IT TO CHANCE

This series leaves a lot to chance

Issues Reviewed: #1-#6
Genre: Fantasy action/adventure
Publisher: Homage/Image Comics
Creative Team: James Robinson and Paul Smith
Price/Frequency: $2.50/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Think Nancy Drew meets "The X-Files." Chance Falconer is a 14-year-old girl ready to start her training as a master of the arcane arts in Devil's Echo, just like all the Falconers before her. Unfortunately, her father denies her the opportunity, stating that the job's only passed down from father to *son*. Against his wishes, Chance sneaks out to prove to her dad she can do the job.

The Good: Devil's Echo is a wonderfully rich fantasy setting and the book is a modern fairy tale inhabited by sprites, goblins, dragons, giant frogs, mysterious tentacled creatures and all sorts of magical beings. Everything's laid out for the reader in a simplistic fashion, so it's very easy for readers young and old to get into the series.

The art fits the atmosphere beautifully. Not only is it engrossing, animated and fluid, but the different styles for different characters further enhance the fantasy setting.

It's quite refreshing to see a young female lead. Chance is a strong, smart and savvy character whose curiosity always seems to get the better of her. And her sidekick dragon, St. George, isn't your typical annoying tag-along—he actually assists her in solving crimes along the way.

The Bad: While the series' simplicity adds to the its accessibility, *Leave it to Chance*'s world is a bit too simple, particularly in issues #1-#5. Sure, the giant frog that's about to destroy Devil's Echo is great, but we want to know more about him; before we really get to know the creature or its capabilities, it's quickly defeated and sent home. Same thing with the Lovecraftian tentacled beast that a monkey was going to be sacrificed to. Readers see the creature for less than three pages before it disappears. What was it? What would it have done in our world? Basically, this series keeps teasing its audience with lots of neat little creatures and incidents, but just doesn't deliver all the way.

The resolutions are simplistic to a fault. With no true substance to the events, we felt deprived when they were finally resolved nice and cleanly. When all is said and done, the plots generally don't seem to go anywhere; though in issue #6, the plot is so far very intriguing and we're curious to see where it leads.

The Buzz: In addition to critical acclaim from the professional community, James Robinson might bring a more mainstream following to *Chance* with his work on Marvel's *Generation X* and *Cable*.

The Skinny: *Leave it to Chance* is filled with a neat little fantasy world whose tales, unfortunately, fail to deliver in the end. Hopefully, as the series gains more ground, the stories will get fleshed out a bit more.

The thrust of the series is Chance trying to win her father over.

The world of Chance is filled with cool creatures and ghouls.

The Verdict: 3 SO-SO

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PICKS

THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN OCTOBER

AKIKO #19

THE AWAKENING #1

TITLES DENOTED WITH A **MR** CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

ADVENTURES IN THE DC UNIVERSE #9

DC COMICS How hard is it to run fast when your skull's the size of a watermelon? Ask the super-speedster Flash, 'cause he's been hit by a ray that atrophied his body and is expanding his head so much, it's liable to blow like Old Faithful. Now Flash really has to use his noggin to face the dual threat of the super-intelligent Gorilla Grodd and that mystery man Cipher. By Steve Vance, John Delaney and Ron Boyd. Vance says, "There was a story from the Barry Allen days of *The Flash* in which the Trickster created a device that caused Flash's head to swell up. As it turns out, the Trickster's device from all those years ago passed from hand-to-hand and has wound up in the hands of Cipher." **$1.95**

AKIKO #19

SIRIUS Akiko hits the sidelines as Mr. Beeba takes over as the book's narrator for the beginning of this two-part quest tale. The bookish Beeba and his as-yet-unnamed bumbling assistant go on a hunt for a scroll which represents the final puzzle piece for Beeba's research. Beeba wants the scroll more than anything, but is he willing to do *anything* to get it? By Mark Crilley. **$2.50**

AQUAMAN #39

DC COMICS The Perkins family members (Neptune Perkins and his sisters Deep Blue and Tsunami) have a reunion, but the festivities are broken up by Rhombus. (Rhombus? They're naming villains after equilateral parallelograms now? Sheesh.) When Deep Blue is waylaid and beaten, Tsunami blames Aquaman for letting it happen and rushes out for revenge. By Peter David, Jim Calafiore, P.L. Palmiotti and Mark McKenna. **$1.95**

THE AWAKENING #1 (OF 4)

IMAGE It's a cruel, cruel world, and the enigma that is Rachel King discovers this the hard way when she wakes up on the mean streets of New York with a bullet wound in her head. Taken to an emergency room for surgery, King must fight for life, not just on the operating table, but in her mind. And if she makes it, her assailant's still out there, waiting... By Stephen Blue. **MR $2.95**

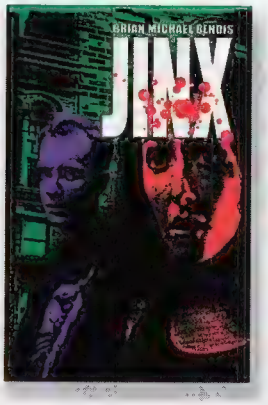
BATMAN & SUPERMAN ADVENTURES: WORLD'S FINEST

DC COMICS Superman and Batman join forces to battle the Joker and Lex Luthor in this comic adaptation of the 90-minute animated adventure scheduled for the Kids' WB! network in October. Woo-hoo!! Anyway, this ish sees the Joker invade Metropolis and, with Lex Luthor's help, the two hatch a plot only Supes and Bats can foil. And what's this, Lois Lane's falling hard for Bruce Wayne? By Paul Dini, Joe Staton and Terry Beatty. **$6.95**

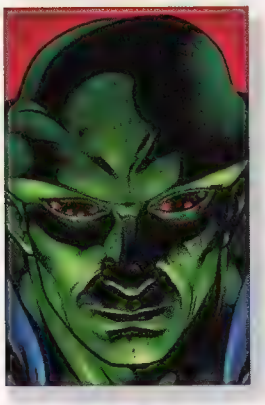
BLOODY MARY: LADY LIBERTY #4 (OF 4)

HELIX/DC COMICS New York City's being held captive by the crazy-as-a-loon Reverend Achilles Seagal and his thousands of followers. The city's only hope? Bloody Mary, an assassin in a nun's habit, and her loopy partner Major. Mary and Major've gotta front the Reverend once and for all, but even if they manage to stop Seagal's villainy, a more daunting task awaits—getting out of New York City alive. By Garth Ennis and Carlos Ezquerra. **$2.50**

THE FLASH #132



JINX #3



JLA #13

KABUKI #1

DAREDEVIL #370

MARVEL Y'know, Daredevil's got the worst luck with women. First Elektra tries shish-kabobbing his best friend. Then Karen Page sells him out for a hit of smack. And now the Black Widow's shot him in the chest. Sure, the Widow may've had an ulterior motive, but Daredevil's so mad with rage, he ain't stopping to ask questions as he goes straight for the throat of the Russian mastermind behind all this nastiness. By Joe Kelly and Gene Colan. **$1.99**

THE FLASH #132

DC COMICS That no-good new villain The Suit already broke the Flash's leg, and now he's trashed a bunch of DC's speediest speedsters. Looks like it's up to The Flash to perform a little spot-removal on The Suit. To do so, however, he's going to need a LOT of help from the Speed Force. By Grant Morrison, Mark Millar, Paul Ryan and John Nyberg. **$1.95**

GREEN LANTERN #93

DC COMICS When someone's brutally murdered at the Halloween Parade in Greenwich Village, N.Y., the avenging spirit Deadman decides the only way to solve the mysterious crime is by taking control of Kyle Rayner (Green Lantern) and his power ring. He's got to hurry, though, because the killer's next victim may be someone in Kyle's apartment building. By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks, Tom Grindberg and Terry Austin. Marz says, "It's to some extent a bit more personal for Green Lantern because he's trying to save someone he knows, someone that he's close to—and then he gets bonked on the head and Deadman has to take over." **$1.95**

HITMAN #21

DC COMICS Can you smell it? Love is in the air in Gotham City as the telepathic Tommy Monaghan (Hitman) and his girlfriend Tiegel remember the overly violent and senselessly brutal events that led them to become a couple. Just like Roseanne and Tom Arnold, we suspect. By Garth Ennis and Steve Pugh. **$2.25**

JINX #3

IMAGE There's a hidden treasure out there somewhere, and the bounty hunter Jinx intends to find it. If she gets her hands on the swag, she'll be able to ditch the criminal-catching business once and for all. Together with her grifter boyfriend Goldfish, Jinx must figure out what a video game arcade full of strangers has to do with the treasure. By Brian Michael Bendis. **$3.95**

JLA #13

DC COMICS "Rock of Ages," Part 4 (of 6). While the JLA's busy battling the Injustice Gang, Darkseid takes over the Earth, the moon and the JLA's base and turns 'em all into Parademon-creating factories. After a 10-year reign of terror under Darkseid's rule, the JLAers go back in time. Their goal? To stop Darkseid's hostile takeover by preventing their younger selves from ever defeating the Gang. By Grant Morrison, Howard Porter and John Dell. **$1.95**

JON SABLE, FREELANCE #1

CALIBER Have gun, will travel...Jon Sable, the freelance mercenary and gun-for-hire, is back in business. After receiving a mysterious phone call that reawakens old memories, Sable travels to Africa. There, he rediscovers his past, finds that one of his old friends has been murdered and goes up against a group of terrorists. And you thought *you* had it bad! By Mike Grell. **$2.95**

KABUKI #1

IMAGE That trained female assassin Kabuki is being held prisoner by a government agency known as "Control Corps." It's the Corps' job to reprogram mentally defective operatives, and that means if Kabuki doesn't escape, she'll be getting a really different outlook on life. But first, she'll have to deal with her doctor/interrogator, and her former comrades who want her dead, the Noh. By David Mack, who says, "The succeeding issues will introduce us to a whole new world of inmates, and delve into the war of wits on the psychological battleground between Kabuki and the doctor. It'll give readers more info on Kabuki's background and childhood." **$2.95**

READ THIS BOOK!

BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN #13 (OF 13)

DC COMICS If you haven't been reading this, one of the coolest Batman stories ever, you've got pumpkin guts for brains. So get off yer duff already and pick up the other 12 issues. Go ahead, we'll wait.

Okay, it's time for the great unmasking, as the identity of serial killer Holiday is finally revealed! On the scariest night of the year, Batman must prevent Holiday from whacking yet another associate of mob boss Carmine "The Roman" Falcone. That, and battle one of his greatest foes (Guess who?) for the very first time. By Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale. "There'll be lots and lots of guest stars," says Loeb, "and keeping with it being the last *Halloween* story that Tim [Sale] and I are doing for a while, it's something of a freakfest. We'll obviously resolve the Holiday murder case and, in case anyone is wondering, Tim and I have drawn nine different versions of the 48-page blockbuster, so the one we actually go to print with will be the one that's the big, surprise ending. And if you believe that, I've got a few more for you..." **$4.95**

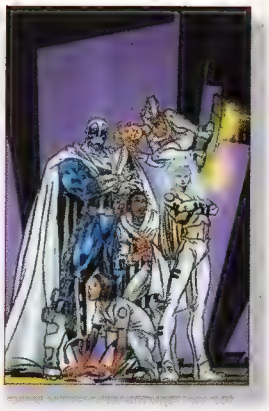
KA-ZAR #8

MARVEL "Urban Jungle," Part 1 (of 3). Talk about your major mismatch! Ka-Zar, the savage in a strange land (New York City), is pitted against his jerky brother Parnival Plunder *and* the cosmic creep Thanos. This one should be shorter than your average Tyson fight. By Mark Waid, Andy Kubert and Jesse Delperdang. **$1.99**

MAGE: THE HERO DEFINED #4

IMAGE Kevin Matchstick (the man with the magic baseball bat and King Arthur connections) and company just say yes to drugs when they take a mysterious concoction given to them by the witch Isis. The heroes start trippin' out, but cut their journey short when Isis is attacked by a swarm of sky-goblins. Ready to help out, Kevin discovers his bat's missing. By Matt Wagner and Jeromy Cox. **$2.50**

MAGE: THE HERO DEFINED #4



QUANTUM AND WOODY #9

TANGENT COMICS

This is not the DC Universe you know—it's one serious tangent.

In a parallel world, a superhero named Atom caused a high-tech revolution, the Cuban Missile Crisis destroyed both Cuba and Russia, and a covert group called NIGHTWING is running surveillance on every U.S. citizen. For one week in October, DC Comics is publishing nine one-shot specials about an all-new universe where only the names are familiar…

- **The Atom #1**

The newest Atom scraps with the Fatal Five, one of whom knows shocking secrets about the original Atom. By Dan Jurgens and Paul Ryan.

- **Doom Patrol #1**

The Earth meets its doom in 2030, but before the end can come, the Doom Patrol goes back in time to 1997 to prevent it. By Dan Jurgens, Sean Chen and Kevin Conrad.

- **The Flash #1**

This Flash is a lot more feminine than the other Flashes, but it might not save her when the covert group NIGHTWING targets her for death. By Todd Dezago, Gary Frank and Cam Smith.

- **Green Lantern #1**

When heroes die before their time, the female Green Lantern is there to revive their spirits so they can seek revenge. By James Robinson, J.H. Williams III and Mick Gray.

- **The Joker #1**

New Atlantis has become a battleground between the police and radiation-scarred refugees, and only one hero could possibly lighten the mood: the female Clown Prince Cut-Up Joker. By Karl Kesel, Matt Haley and Tom Simmons.

- **Metal Men #1**

War is Hell, but to gain fame, the super-soldiers in the Metal Men will have to win a bloody, bloody war. By Ron Marz, Mike McCone and Mark McKenna.

- **Nightwing #1**

Trouble is brewing in NIGHTWING, as tensions within the group threaten to expose the organization to the people of the United States. By John Ostrander and Jan Duursema.

- **Sea Devils #1**

Something evil is rising from the bottom of the ocean, and the heroic Sea Devils (mutated from undersea life) must stop it before it destroys Earth. By Kurt Busiek, Vince Giarrano and Tom Palmer.

- **The Secret Six #1**

The greatest heroes from the Tangent Universe (Flash, Atom, Joker, Plastic Man, Spectre and Manhunter) team up to save the moon from being blown to bits. By Chuck Dixon, Tom Grummett and Lary Stucker.

ALL TANGENT TITLES: $2.95 EACH

MAJOR BUMMER #5

DC COMICS The thundering footsteps you hear are those of Tyrannosaurus Reich, the meanest German-speaking Nazi dinosaur to come down the pike since…well, forever. Reich has invaded the DC Universe through a matter vacuum created by an explosion from a faulty engine, and someone's gotta put things right. Sounds like a job for our slacker pal Lou Martin! By John Arcudi, Doug Mahnke and Tom Nguyen. Arcudi says, "The big, muscular guy [Lou] does *not* fight the dinosaur. Maybe I'm stupid, but I'm just tired of seeing guys every issue beating the crap out of each other. So, Tyrannosaurus Reich wreaks havoc and, in the meantime, someone does save the day, but I don't want to blow the ending." **$2.50**

NIGHTWING #15

DC COMICS The city of Blüdhaven, much like a cesspool, is a cesspool. There's going to be a cleansing, though, as Nightwing gets some help from his ex-partner Batman, and the two take out "Lunchmeat" Deever's criminal operation. After Deever, the heroes go huntin' for Blockbuster, Blüdhaven's superscummy top crime boss. By Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. **$1.95**

POISON ELVES #28

SIRIUS Our favorite elf Lusiphur goes on a killing spree, and who can blame him? His girlfriend's been injured by the minions of the evil Vido, so Lusipher's out for blood. Unfortunately, his idea of revenge is to indiscriminately kill any lawmen, assassins or thieves in his way. We recommend a job at the post office. By Drew Hayes. **$2.50**

PREACHER #32

VERTIGO/DC COMICS *Les Enfants Du Sange* (literally "The Infants of Blood") attack Jesse Custer, his girlfriend Tulip and the blood-hungry vampire Cassidy. While Tulip and Cassidy deal with *Les Enfants*, Jesse is stuck in a voodoo-like trance. Plus, a huge reptile of some sort enters the scene. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR $2.50**

QUANTUM AND WOODY #9

ACCLAIM The duo of Quantum and Woody may be reduced to a solo act as Woody discovers he's dying. So while Woody's carefree life is passing before his eyes, Quantum's racing around trying valiantly to save his partner. In the quest for a cure, Quantum meets up with those ever-so-cute teens, the Troublemakers. Yup, smells like a crossover. By Christopher Priest, Kevin Kobasic and Alex Maleev. **$2.50**

RED ROCKET 7 #3 (OF 7)

DARK HORSE Red Rocket 7 is an alien, a clone and one heckuva rock musician—kind of like Michael Jackson, minus the "heckuva rock musician" part. Well, 7's music career is really startin' to take off, but there's some dark clouds ahead in the form of a British rock invasion (think Beatles, not Oasis) and a nosy, determined reporter named Lynn. By Mike Allred. **$3.95**

RIB #3

CALIBER All is not well in Metro City, as the mayor receives a messenger from the city's crime boss, Tybirius Cobb. Now, as the mayor's making some shady deals, Rib (a human-sized worm—yuck) and his wormy friends Tobias and Max discuss the problems facing the city. By Andrew Ford and Michael Kelleher. **$2.95**

ROBIN #48

DC COMICS There's a 12-year-old boy who's come to power in a third-world country, and he's hired Robin's young foe The General to control his armies. With the General threatening to start a world war, Robin and Nightwing must invade the country and save the day. God bless America, where kids aren't allowed to drink, smoke, drive a car or vote—and certainly not start wars. By Chuck Dixon, Eduardo Barreto and Bob Smith. **$1.95**

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #57

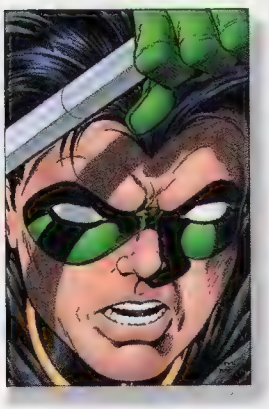
VERTIGO/DC COMICS "The Cannon," Part 1 (of 4). The New York police suspect that Nazi gold has been smuggled into the city—and they just may be right. As a gaggle of coin collectors gathers for a convention, lust for the gold is the spark for murder. Enter the Golden Age Sandman and Lt. Burke, who find themselves competing to find the killer first. By Steven T. Seagle, Matt Wagner, Michael Lark and Richard Case. **MR $2.50**

SAVAGE DRAGON #42

IMAGE The Savage Dragon and the Special Operations Strike Force (SOS) must save the Earth from the merciless attack of Darklord. Darklord, whose brains are hanging out of his skull, wants to conquer Earth and make it his new home. He's not too picky, either, so he's willing to kill all of humanity to get the job done. By Erik Larsen, who says, "It's the first time I've really gone cosmic on the book. It's been fairly low-key in dealing with things that are going on in Chicago and on a very local level. This will also be the first time that [the Dragon] and his new team work together." **$2.50**

STARDUST #1 (OF 4)

VERTIGO/DC COMICS Tristan Thorn, half-human/half-faerie, begins chasing a falling star and leaves the sanctuary of the human town Wall to enter the fairy land of Faerie. There, he finds the answers about his magical heritage and encounters a slew of goblins, witches, wizards, giants and other beings. Plus, there's something strange at the site where the fallen star's landed. By Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess. **MR $5.95**



ROBIN #48

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #57

STRANGERS IN PARADISE #10

ABSTRACT STUDIO Katchoo has pulled a disappearing act (again) and is off somewhere in Los Angeles. Her friend Francine's desperate to find her and, with nowhere else to turn, she seeks help from Detective Walsh—who has the FBI file on Katchoo. Trapped like a fly on the toilet seat in *Wizard*'s bathroom (eeeyeeeew), Katchoo must seek employment with her

PAPERBACK PICKS

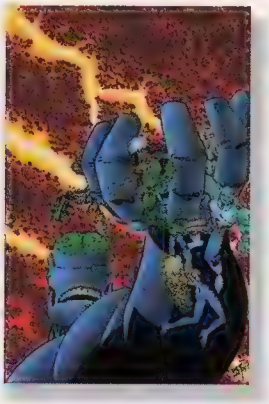
Trade Paperbacks You Won't Wanna Miss

Batman: Prodigal (DC Comics)
While Bruce Wayne recovers from the mental stress of having his back broken, there's a new Batman in town, and beneath the long underwear, he's really Dick Grayson. Watch Dick (formerly Robin and Nightwing) try to cope with the legend of Batman and finally step out of Wayne's shadow. This book reprints the 12-part "Prodigal" storyline that ran through all the Batman books. By Chuck Dixon, Alan Grant, Doug Moench and more. **$14.95**

Starchild: Crossroads (Coppervale Press)
The TwoPenny Inn is a haven for travelers, thieves, poets and holy men. Now four stories from the original *Starchild* series, told in and around the Inn, are compiled: "The Weaver's Tale," "The Innkeeper's Tale," "The Wanderer's Tale" and "The Bard's Tale." By James A. Owen. Softcover—**$12**; hardcover—**$20**; signed-and-numbered "connoisseur's edition"—**$100**

Flaming Carrot: The Wild Should Remain (Dark Horse) ▼
It's remove-your-cerebrum time as the Flaming Carrot returns for even more antisocial antics. Here, he goes on a drinking spree with Death and a rubber love doll, and gets trapped in Limbo. Plus, there's other weirdness that involves Congress, Brussels sprouts-flavored ice cream (sounds tasty), pajama parties, and some woman silly enough to breast-feed a dictionary. This trade paperback reprints *Flaming Carrot* #4-#11. By Bob Burden. **$17.95**

Pakkins' Land: Book One (Caliber)
A boy named Paul makes a mysterious journey to an equally mysterious realm known as "Pakkins' Land." Stuck in this land, Paul makes friends with some animals and attempts to find the missing King Aryah. By Gary and Rhoda Shipman. **$9.95**



SAVAGE DRAGON #42

UNLIMITED ACCESS #1

old boss, Darcy Parker. By Terry Moore, who says, "It's a big, big, *big* turning point, because Katchoo's been running from her past since the beginning of the book and, in issues #7-#9, it all caught up to her. In [issue #10], Katchoo is forced to go back to work for Darcy Parker, so we're going to see Katchoo do what she used to do—and apparently, she was the best at it." **$2.75**

TERMINAL CITY: AERIAL GRAFFITI #2 (OF 5)

VERTIGO/DC COMICS Weirdness abounds as the ex-human fly Cosmo Quinn seeks to re-enter show business, the fire-fiend Torch Johnson threatens to set Cast Iron Beach's roller coaster on fire, two nuns leave their convent to join up with a Wild West striptease show headed for Terminal City and Dr. Wu shows off his magnificent gyradoscope. We know where *we're* going for our next vacation. By Dean Motter and Michael Lark. **MR $2.50**

THUNDERBOLTS #9

MARVEL The Thunderbolts are New York's hottest new superhero group and the biggest group of phonies in the Marvel Universe. They're really the Masters of Evil in disguise and they've got a secret plan to take control of the world. Now, the former Avenger Black Widow confronts the team. Has she figured out their dirty little secret? Could be. By Kurt Busiek, Roger Stern, Mark Bagley and Vince Russell. **$1.99**

UNLIMITED ACCESS #1 (OF 4)

MARVEL The Hulk battles Green Lantern, and Jonah Hex shoots it out with the Two-Gun Kid as war erupts between the DC and Marvel Universes. Now, only the hero Access can put things right. Access, who can travel between universes, learns he can travel through time too. As he struggles to control his newfound power, a cosmic being of great power targets him for elimination. By Karl Kesel, Pat Olliffe and Al Williamson. **$2.99**

YOUNG HEROES IN LOVE #7

DC COMICS Ever wonder about the Young Heroes in Love, those frisky superheroes who seem to be more interested in procreating than protecting and serving? Well, wonder no longer as the secret lives and origins of the Young Heroes in Love become public. By Dan Raspler, Dev Madan and Keith Champagne. Raspler says, "You meet Monstergirl's parents, and Zip-Kid's boyfriend. You see what Thunderhead does for a living and what Bonfire does to become a famous superhero journalist. You see Frostbite trying to be a hero to the people of the frozen [Canadian] north and what Hard Drive does to make the money to get the team going. And you get to see what Junior does in his spare time—or what he doesn't do." **$1.95**

Also shipping in OCTOBER

Ash: Cinder and Smoke #6 (Event)
The fireman Ash and the villainous Smoke duke it out in one of them brawls to end it all. **$2.95**

Batman Books (DC Comics)
The villainous Penguin sets a trap for Batman in *Batman* #549, and in *Detective Comics* #716, Batman learns that he can't possibly save everyone in need when he meets a father who's joined the mob. **$1.95 each**

The Darkness #9 (Image)
The Witchblade gauntlet has targeted Jackie Estacado (The Darkness) for elimination and, oddly enough, a fight ensues. **$2.50**

Divine Right: The Adventures of Max Faraday #2 (Image)
The government and forces of darkness close in on Max. **$2.50**

Gambit #4 (Marvel)
Gambit must scrap with the evil Stoker for the soul of a fallen angel. **$2.50**

Gen^{13} #24 (Image)
Fairchild, Freefall and Grunge scrap with an alien race and the reunited Team 7. **$2.50**

Gen^{13} Interactive #1 (Image)
The Gen^{13} kids meet the evil Panic, and readers vote on how this mini-series ends. **$2.50**

Generation X #33 (Marvel)
The Xavier School for Gifted Youngsters is burglarized by some local punks, and the Gen X kids hunt the thieves down to retrieve some very important items. **$1.99**

Heroes Reborn: The Return #1-#4 (Marvel)
Franklin Richards and the "Heroes Reborn" characters work to merge the Marvel Universe with the "Heroes Reborn" one, but one universe may not survive. **$2.50 each**

Painkiller Jane #5 (Event)
Painkiller Jane and the 22 Brides take on Caliban and his brainless flunkies. **$2.95**

Spawn #67 (Image)
Private investigators Sam and Twitch team up with Spawn to solve a mystery. **$1.95**

Spider-Man Books (Marvel)
In *Amazing Spider-Man* #429, the Absorbing Man and Titania play hero and try bringing Spidey in after he attacks civilian Norman Osborn. The Man-Thing's altered by Asgardian Norn Stones and Spidey must deal with it in *Marvel Team-Up* #4. *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #86 has gangster Jimmy Six fit his dad for a pair of cement shoes, and Dr. Strange enlists Spidey's help in *Sensational Spider-Man* #22. Finally, Grizzly and the Gibbon become superheroes in *Spectacular Spider-Man* #252. **$1.99 each**

Star Wars Books (Dark Horse)
Grand Admiral Thrawn threatens to start a second Clone War in *Star Wars: Dark Force Rising*, while the Sith Empire falls in *Star Wars: Tales of The Jedi—The Fall of the Sith Empire* #5. In *Star Wars: X-Wing Rogue Squadron: In the Empire's Service* #3, the Rogue Squadron dogfights an elite Imperial squadron and loses a few pilots. **$2.95**

Superman Books (DC Comics)
Lois Lane's sister Lucy vanishes in *Action Comics* #740, and in *Adventures of Superman* #553, Supes fights three brand-new superscuminals. In *Superman* #130, Metropolis' elite show up for a costume party, and some o' the jerks who tried bustin' up Lois and Clark's wedding try kidnapping Lois in *Superman: The Man of Steel* #74. **$1.95 each**

Uncanny X-Men #350 (Marvel)
Gambit exposes his secrets and reveals his connection to the sinister Mr. Sinister. Prismatic foil edition—**$3.99**; regular cover—**$2.99**

Witchblade #18 (Image)
The Mafia is fighting the Yakuza, and Sara Pezzini can't stop them because the Witchblade's too busy trying to kill hitman Jackie Estacado (The Darkness). **$2.50**

Wolverine #119 (Marvel)
Reunited with the X-Men, Wolverine brawls with a never-before-seen bad guy. **$1.99**

Wolverine: Days of Future Past #1 (Marvel)
In a new prequel to "Days of Future Past" (*Uncanny X-Men* #141-#142), the evil Magneto summons his old foes to find the reclusive Wolverine. **$2.50**

X-Men #70 (Marvel)
After the long, drawn-out events of "Operation: Zero Tolerance," the X-Men get three new members, and Juggernaut shows up stakin' a claim to Professor X's fortune. **$2.99**

SPECIAL HALLOWEEN

Gore Picks

READING FOR THE RECENTLY EMBALMED

BIG BANG COMICS #15

IMAGE It's spooky fun as Dr. Weird, Master of the Macabre, tries to prevent a human sacrifice and meets the Swamp Demon Bog. In another creepy tale, Mr. Mask, the villain with the changeable face, moves into a haunted house. By Big Bang Studios. **$2.95**

CHAOS! NIGHTMARE THEATER #1–#4

CHAOS! COMICS Mister Mischief and his main squeeze Psychotica are your hosts for a nightmarish trip exploring the various movie monsters that plagued each decade, from the 1930s to the 1960s. By various creators. **$2.50 each**

EVIL ERNIE: DESTROYER #2 (OF 9)

CHAOS! COMICS It's traveling time as Evil Ernie, Chastity and Smiley the Psychotic Button head to Atlanta. Ernie wants to find nuclear access codes and start a world war so he can see his true love Lady Death once again. By Brian Pulido, Philip Nutman, Kyle Hotz, Tim Bradstreet and Jason Jensen. **$2.95**

THE HAMMER #1 (OF 4)

DARK HORSE A 1,500-year-old warrior named Alaric Malleus, a.k.a. Hammer, returns to restore the natural order to a world gone mad. We suggest he start by poking his sword through Pauly Shore and working his way up from there. By Kelley Jones. **MR $2.95**

HELLBLAZER #120

VERTIGO/DC COMICS John Constantine takes readers on a tour of London, embarking on a voyage of discovery wherein he ultimately learns to avoid all English food like it was a charging bull. Along the way, he'll regale his audience with local legends, fables and tall tales. By Paul Jenkins and Sean Phillips. **MR $3.50**

THE HELLBOY JR. HALLOWEEN SPECIAL

DARK HORSE Hell ain't a bad place to be, if you're the diaper-wearing Hellboy Jr. The one-shot *Halloween Special* contains five super-fun, super-spooktacular adventures involving Jr. and his friends (Wheezy the Sick Little Witch, the Ginger Beef Boy and Somnambo the Sleeping Giant), one of which includes the memorable nude image of a dead Adolf Hitler. By Bill Wray, Mike Mignola, Hilary Barta, Dave Cooper and Stephen DeStefano. **$3.95**

KID DEATH & FLUFFY HALLOWEEN SPECIAL #1

EVENT Kid Death is your average little street punk. His pal Fluffy is a cybernetic Tyrannosaurus Rex with the mind of a cocker spaniel. Now, the two are battling zombies, vampires and werewolves on a night when they should be out stealing candy from smaller kids. By Rick Parker and John Cebollero. **$2.95**

LADY DEATH #0: DEATH BECOMES HER

CHAOS! COMICS After meeting up with Death herself, Lady Death travels back to her roots in medieval Europe. Once, Lady Death was Hope, but she renounced her humanity. This ish answers the question, "What would have happened if Lady Death remained mortal?" By Brian Pulido, Drew Bittner, Steven Hughes and Jack Gray. **$2.95**

MAN-THING #1

VAMPIRELLA/DRACULA: THE CENTENNIAL

MAN-THING #1

MARVEL Straight outta the swamps, the Man-Thing returns to save the Nexus of All Realities and the Marvel Universe from destruction. He's gonna need some help from a human guide, so he turns to Ellen Brandt, the woman who turned him from animal to vegetable. By J.M. DeMatteis and Liam Sharp. **$2.99**

MASTER DARQUE

ACCLAIM Brixton Sound is eager to save his mother from dying, so he seeks the evil Alexander Darque, who sends Sound on a supernatural journey through the new Valiant Universe's seedy underbelly. By Christina Z. and Leonardo Manco. **MR $3.95**

VAMPIRELLA/DRACULA: THE CENTENNIAL

HARRIS Celebrate 100 years of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* with three tales of terror linking Dracula and Vampirella, and updating Dracula's image for the new century. By Alan Moore, James Robinson, Warren Ellis, David Mack, Gary Frank and more. **$4.95**

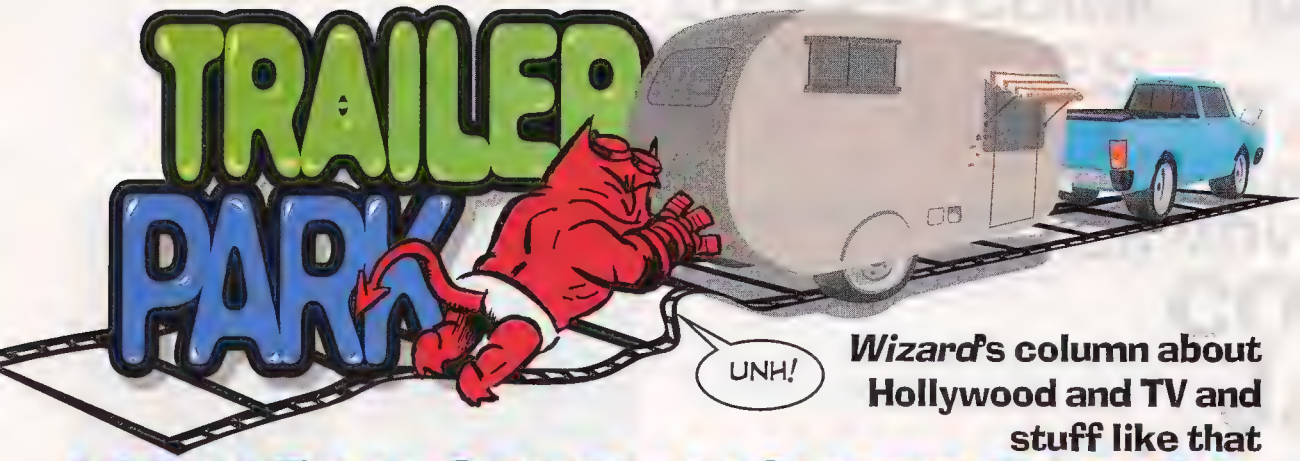
WILDSTORM HALLOWEEN '97 #1

IMAGE The WildStorm characters find themselves fighting the Mayan god of Death and experiencing other scary tricks in three connected short stories that tie WildStorm's past into its future, with chilling ramifications. By Chris Golden, Peter Gutierrez, Tom Sniegoski, Ryan Odagawa and Chris Warner. **$2.50**

WOLFF & BYRD, COUNSELORS OF THE MACABRE #17

EXHIBIT A PRESS For lawyers Wolff & Byrd, every day is a trick (for their clients) and a treat (for themselves). Here, the lawyers take on three spooky cases and make things even scarier by presenting their clients with their bills without benefit of anesthesia. By Batton Lash. **$2.50** W

HELLBOY JR.



Wizard's column about Hollywood and TV and stuff like that

HULK FILM GREEN-LIGHTED FOR '98

By Rob Allstetter

Marvel's first heavy-hitter to reach the big screen will be its heaviest hitter of all: **The Incredible Hulk**.

The production of a big-budget, live-action film, simply titled "Hulk," is scheduled to begin in late October from Universal Pictures. "Hulk" is targeted for a July 4, 1998 release.

The film will be produced by **Gale Anne Hurd** ("Terminator 2"), who has worked with Marvel for four years in developing the project. Hurd's husband, **Jonathan Hensleigh**, wrote the script and will make his directorial debut on "Hulk."

In his first on-the-record interview about the movie, Hensleigh said he hopes to take a fresh approach to Marvel's green monster, created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in the early 1960s, and bring his origin into the 1990s.

"Stan Lee's been very favorable to the story," Hensleigh said. "When Stan Lee gave us the gamma bomb, it was brought out of the Cold War. We're not in a cold war anymore, and there is less focus on armaments.

"I had the desire to find something equally as topical, that would provide just as good of a world for movie fiction. So I focused on genetic research, mutation, cloning, gene-splicing and all that. It's very topical.

"We're hoping the comic-book purists will like the fresh approach."

The movie's villains will be three men who are mutated by Banner's experiments, which also cause his rage-induced transformation into the Hulk. "They have genetically altered tissue implanted in them," Hensleigh said. "Banner's experiment to accelerate the growth of that tissue is done with gamma radiation."

Casting was taking place as *Wizard* went to press and should be completed by the time this magazine sees print. Hensleigh confirmed that **Johnny Depp** ("Ed Wood") has been in discussions about appearing in the film.

"For Bruce Banner, we're looking for an actor who can convey huge intelligence, nerdiness, an obsessiveness and, also, smoldering inner demons," Hensleigh said.

Johnny Depp (left) has been in discussions to play Bruce Banner (right) in next summer's "Hulk." The Hulk himself is expected to be entirely computer-generated.

Hensleigh said the Hulk will be an entirely computer-generated character. Award-winning effects house Industrial Light and Magic will handle the Hulk character, which Hensleigh said would appear in two phases: one that stands 9 feet tall and another that hits the 12-foot mark.

This will be the bestial version of the Hulk, and he will talk.

"You'll never hear, 'Hulk smash!', but he will speak primally," Hensleigh said. "There will be an economy of language, mostly just to convey the simplest of ideas."

Hensleigh worked on and off on the "Hulk" script for about a year-and-a-half, fitting it in between writing "Con Air" and next summer's Bruce Willis film, "Armageddon."

"I tried several different storylines, but none of them worked. I hated them all. They were crap," Hensleigh said. "Finally, a thought clicked, and when I showed it to other people and they reacted, I knew I had something."

The film—to be shot in Phoenix, northern Arizona and Los Angeles—was originally going to be directed by Joe Johnston, with whom Hensleigh collaborated on "Jumanji." But

Johnston dropped out to work on a smaller, character-driven film.

"I thought, 'Hey, I know this story better than anybody,'" said Hensleigh, who also wrote "The Rock" and "The Saint." "I went to [Universal] and said, 'Why don't you guys think about me?' Universal liked that, thankfully for me."

Dealing with a computer-generated Hulk will be just one of the difficult tasks for Hensleigh, who admitted feeling challenged with his first directing job.

"I feel if I rely on the great people around me—and I know it sounds like a clichéd remark by an NFL quarterback, but they're great people—and stay focused, I can succeed," he said. "But, yes, it's a knee-knocker."

Hensleigh said the simplified title "Hulk" is partly to separate it from the live-action "The Incredible Hulk" television series that starred Bill Bixby and Lou Ferrigno.

"It's also the simplicity," he said. "It's one word. It's very memorable and it's fresh."

"Hulk" is not Hensleigh's first foray into the world of comics—he did rewrites on the upcoming Dark Horse movie "Virus"—and he is aware of the character's legacy.

"The Hulk, really for me, is the best of the Marvel properties," Hensleigh said. "It's the most classic and the most cool—if it's done properly."

MIGHTY MARVEL UPDATE

• Sources state either **"The Avengers"** or **"Captain America"** will be the next Marvel animated series—following the upcoming "Silver Surfer"—to be developed by Saban Entertainment for Fox. An announcement is expected this fall.

• Don't look for Pip the Troll to have his trademark cigar with him in the **"Silver Surfer"** animated series. "Fox wouldn't allow it on a Saturday morning show," said Larry Brody the show's producer/story editor. The animated version of Pip is raised on a planet in the Kree civilization, as his people were genetically engineered to serve the Kree. The Surfer first encounters Pip when he is leading a rebellion.

• **J.M. DeMatteis** (*Spectacular Spider-Man*) has turned in an early story treatment for the **"Daredevil"** live-action movie from 20th Century Fox. According to sources, Elektra will also be appearing in the film. Carlo Carlei is scheduled to direct, with Chris Columbus producing.

• New Line Cinema has scheduled the **"Blade"** movie for a Feb. 13, 1998 release.

Superman and Batman team up on TV.

WORLD'S FINEST—AT LAST

The three-part, 90-minute animated team-up of **Batman** and **Superman** will happen on Oct. 4 on the Kids' WB! network.

The story takes place in Metropolis, and producer Bruce Timm said he hoped to someday bring Superman to Gotham City, perhaps in a future "Batman" episode. Look for a DC comic book adapting the story—*Batman & Superman Adventures: World's Finest*—on Sept. 24, 10 days before the show's airdate.

Meanwhile, Warner Bros. Animation representatives deny reports over the Internet that have indicated an "Adventures in the DC Universe" series will start in 1998. "There is no truth—repeat, no truth—to these rumors in any way, shape or form," said Timm.

Actress Tia Carrere is vying to star in "Shi."

SHI COULD HAPPEN

Shi could be headed to the big screen. The heroine's creator Billy Tucci has written a script for a live-action "Shi" movie that is currently being shopped around to directors by producer Elie Samaha of Phoenician Films.

Samaha is the husband of actress **Tia Carrere** ("Wayne's World," "Kull the Conqueror"), who is interested in playing the character. Carrere is featured on a *Shi* comic cover and appeared at the Crusade booth during the San Diego convention.

The "Shi" film will essentially adapt the original *Way of the Warrior* maxi-series, although it's doubtful Tomoe the ninja will play a significant, if any, role.

Is the twosome gone for good?

THE END OF BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD?

Dude, this sucks: The last new episode of MTV's **"Beavis and Butt-head"** will air on Oct. 10. Creator Mike Judge is pulling the plug on the show after some 200 episodes. The boys could return in specials or a sequel to "Beavis and Butt-head Do America," which grossed $63.1 million last winter, the best gross ever for a non-Disney animated film.

Judge's other series, "King of the Hill," enters its second season on Fox this fall as a ratings sensation, actually pulling in bigger numbers than "X-Files" on Sunday nights. Guest voices for the second season will include Burt Reynolds, Stockard Channing, John Ritter, Sally Field, Carl Reiner, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Chris Rock, Paul Rodriguez and the band Green Day.

HESS HEATS UP 'MORTAL KOMBAT'

New Line Cinema delayed the release of **"Mortal Kombat Annihilation"** from August until Nov. 21, but that should not be viewed as a sign of trouble, said one of the film's stars.

"The fact that they pushed it back is actually good, not bad," said **Sandra Hess**, who plays Sonya Blade in the sequel to 1995's "Mortal Kombat." "[New Line] just gave [the producers] a huge amount of money because they believe in it and wanted to go for more and better special effects."

Hess said she is glad the film—based on the popular video games—won't get caught up among the summer blockbusters it would have been facing with its original August release date.

"That's tough competition," she said. "If we keep ours until Thanksgiving, there might be other big movies then, but not of this genre. That's a good thing.

"I have to tell you, completely objectively, the second [Mortal Kombat film] blows the first one out of the water. The first one is awful compared to the second one."

Hess said the shooting schedule for "Annihilation" was grueling.

"I was gone for five months," she said. "I was in Thailand and in Jordan and in England. It was really hard because we worked six-day weeks and 14-hour days. It was incredibly challenging because it was so physical."

Hess is also playing Viper in the "Nick Fury" telefilm to air on Fox in either January or February. "Playing villains is fun," she said. "And Viper is so mean."

MTV TAKES ON 'HATE'

MTV's 'Hate' boys

Fans of the alternative comic book ***Hate*** should love the upcoming animated series based on it. That's because the Fantagraphics comic book's creator, Peter Bagge, has relocated to New York for production of the "Hate" series, which will begin either this fall or winter on MTV.

Bagge will be the head writer for "Hate," working closely with MTV producer Abby Terkulhe. The show is being produced in conjunction with Terry Zwigoff and Associates, who produced the "Crumb" documentary.

"This is what I've always wanted in terms of adapting *Hate* into another medium," Bagge said. "An animated movie could have been okay, but anyone who knows me knows that I like the episodic nature of the comics, and that's why I find television preferable, as it relates to my comic."

Bagge said the show will closely follow the early issues of the comic book, with the pilot focusing on the second issue. It will introduce main character Buddy Bradley as well as his cast of misfit friends, Stinky, George C. Hamilton III, Lisa and Valerie. Future episodes will adapt the "Follow that Dream" comic book story arc, where Buddy manages Stinky's band, Leonard and the Love Gods.

SHORT TAKES

"Batman & Robin" will be released on home video from Warner Bros. on Oct. 21. It will retail for $22.99....On Oct. 11, the **"Men in Black"** series begins on Kids' WB!. Providing voices for the show are Jack Napier as Zed, Keith Diamond as J and Ed O'Ross as K....**"Spawn,"** the live-action film based on Todd McFarlane's comics character, helped set a box-office record with its opening weekend in early August. "Spawn" took in $21.5 million in its debut weekend, the fourth-largest opening in New Line Cinema history. Coupled with "Air Force One," which brought in $25.4 million, the first weekend in August was the largest ever at the box office for that month....Neil Gaiman said that Henson Films will be making a **"Neverwhere"** film, adapting his novel. He will be writing it, with Denise DiNovi producing and Jesse Dylan (Bob's son) directing. Production might begin as soon as January in England....The status of the **"Justice League of America"** live-action television movie, produced by Warner Bros. for CBS, remains uncertain. No plans have been announced for an airdate for the movie, and CBS has not added "JLA" to its mid-season schedule as a replacement series. Sources said that a 20-minute presentation was made to CBS, not an entire film. It's unclear if "Justice League of America" has actually been completed....**Erik Larsen** said the USA Network will not be broadcasting any more new episodes of the **"Savage Dragon"** animated series. "That's fine by me—I prefer comics," Larsen said....Production has begun on the **"X-Files"** feature film. The cast will include Martin Landau and Blythe Danner....**"The Lost World: Jurassic Park"** will be released on home video on Nov. 4....The Aug. 13

Described as "Peanuts" gone bad, "South Park" looks to be a ratings winner

debut episode of the animated comedy series **"South Park"** was Comedy Central's highest-rated original series premiere....Sting will be providing songs for **"Kingdom of the Sun,"** an animated movie from Disney; it's rumored to be a "Prince and the Pauper" type of story. In other Disney news, it is branching off its **"Hercules"** animated movie. Sixty-five half-hour TV episodes have been ordered, with 13 to go to ABC in the fall of 1998 and the other 52 being prepped for syndication. **Tate Donovan** returns from the movie to voice Hercules. **W**

As a tribute to Beavis & Butt-head, Detroit-based writer Rob Allstetter ate stale nachos and cursed at Poison videos for a week.

Matt McColm (below) plays NightMan in the new syndicated series.

'NIGHTMAN' TAKES FLIGHT

The "NightMan" television series, which began with a two-hour world-premiere movie that aired in syndication in late September, is off to a positive start with clearance in more than 90 percent of the country.

To help create an edge for the show, which is based on the Marvel/Malibu Comics character and from Tribune Entertainment, the producers have enlisted Flat Earth Productions, the special effects house best known for its work on "Hercules: The Legendary Journeys" and "Xena: Warrior Princess."

"It's our hope that we can bring the same level of computer-generated graphics that we enjoy in the movies to television," said Executive Producer Glen Larson.

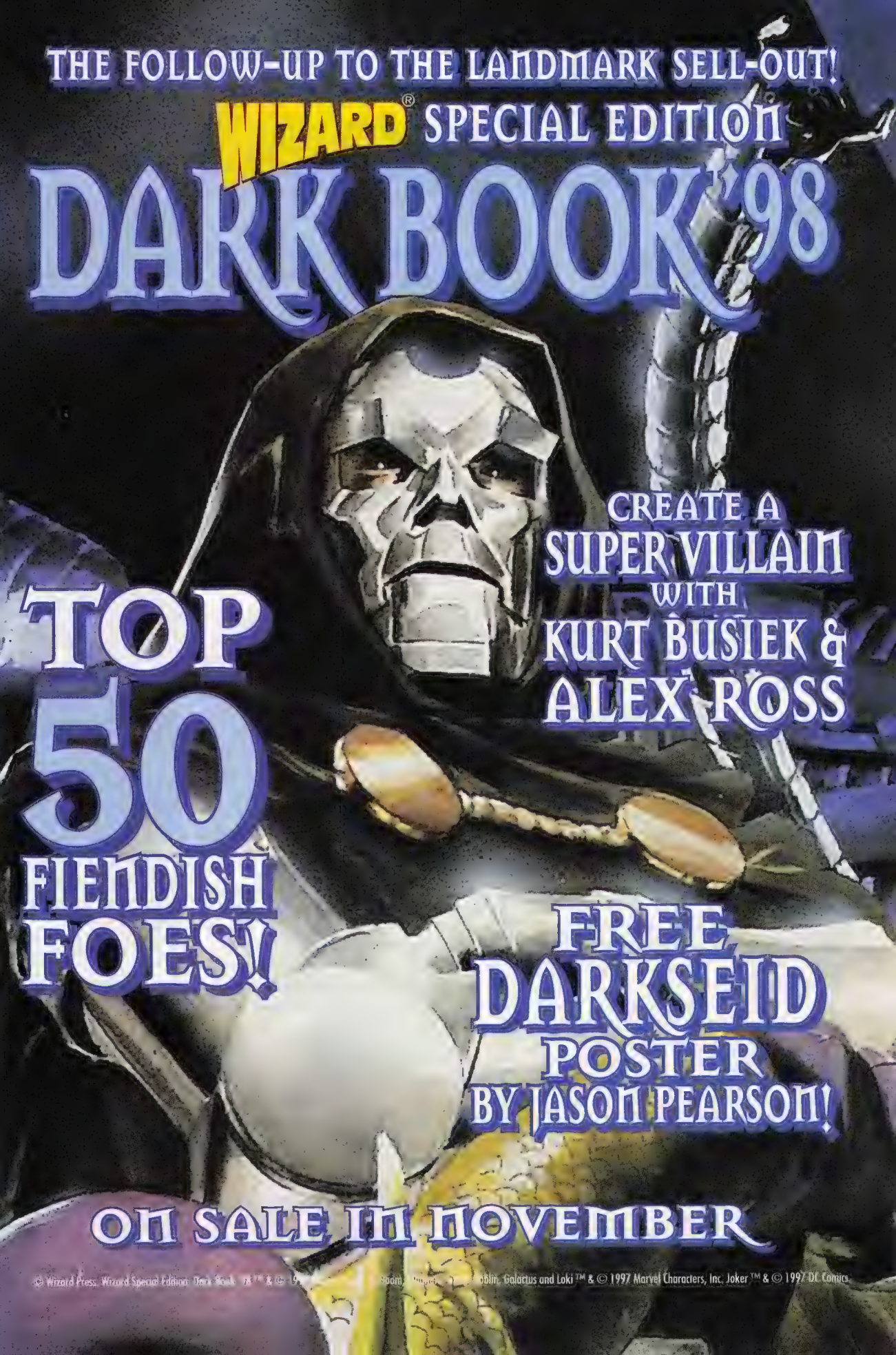
Filling out the hero's high-tech costume, driving the spiffy Plymouth Prowler and playing saxophonist Johnny Domino, the alter ego of NightMan, is Matt McColm, a veteran actor/model/stuntman in his first lead role.

The movie also establishes the supporting cast for the remainder of the first season's 22 episodes. Derek Webster plays weapons system engineer Raleigh Jordon, who helps equip Johnny.

The cast also includes Earl Holliman ("Police Woman") as Frank Dominus, Johnny's father and a retired cop who can't seem to keep his nose out of police business; Michael Woods as Lt. Charlie Dann, Frank's former partner; and Felecia Bell (Jennifer Sisko on "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine") as Jessica Rodgers, owner of the House of Soul, where Johnny performs.

"They're making lots of [shows like 'NightMan'] next year because the stations were very enthused about what we showed them," said Larson.

One-hour episodes of "NightMan" begin the week of Oct. 6. ■ *RA*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CHARACTER PROFILE:

Deadpool

BY MATTHEW BRADY

VITAL STATS

REAL NAME: Unknown
CURRENT ALIAS: Wade Wilson
AGE: Late 20s
HEIGHT: 6' 1"
WEIGHT: 195 lbs.
HAIR COLOR: None
EYE COLOR: Blue
FIRST APPEARANCE: *New Mutants* #98
TITLE CURRENTLY APPEARING IN: *Deadpool* (Marvel)
MAJOR ENEMIES: Typhoid Mary, Black Tom, Cable, X-Force, Wolverine and Juggernaut

ORIGIN

A mercenary extraordinaire, the man who currently calls himself Wade Wilson has a mysterious and shadowy past. Of what little is known, it has been revealed that early in his life as a mercenary, Wilson was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Once Wilson learned of his cancer, he became mentally unhinged, and sought out more and more dangerous missions. This death-wish mentality brought him to the attention of Canada's Department H, which was looking for subjects for clandestine medical treatments. Department H initiated Wilson into the top-secret Weapon X program, and used him to test a man-made derivative of Wolverine's healing factor.

The treatment worked, and cured Wilson of his cancer. However, it completely altered his skin, giving him a monstrous appearance. Realizing the irony that his outside now matched his monstrous inside, Wilson embraced the madness he'd only been flirting with. Mirroring the unpredictability and chaotic nature of the world, Wilson accepted that his only recourse was to laugh at his fate, and move on. Donning a costume and taking the name Deadpool, the merc with the mouth was born.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Shortly after his treatment, Wilson severed all ties with Department H, preferring to be his own boss in the soldier-for-hire trade. As a freelance mercenary, Wilson worked on both sides of the law, aiding the likes of Interpol and the black ops team Wild Pack, as well as the international terrorist Tolliver, and sometimes even switching sides in the middle of a fight if the money was right.

When Wilson was hired by Tolliver to kill Cable, he learned that his former lover Vanessa was posing as Cable's girlfriend, Domino. Intent on killing both Cable and Vanessa, Wilson attacked Cable and X-Force on several occasions, ultimately taking part in a battle that saw Tolliver dead and Vanessa grievously wounded.

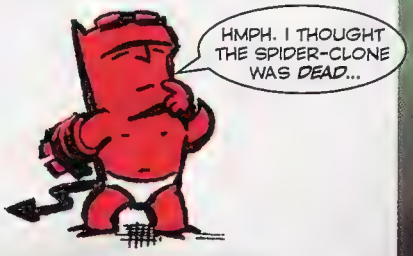
Upon Tolliver's demise, several mercenary factions, including Vanessa, sought out Wilson, thinking he had inside information regarding Tolliver's will and secret cache of weapons. The chase involved Juggernaut and Black Tom Cassidy, who were hunting Wilson in order to steal his healing factor to aid the dying Cassidy.

Through Wilson's interactions with Black Tom, he came to know Tom's niece, Siryn of X-Force. Slowly, the two became attracted to one another. Siryn helped Wilson see the goodness inside him, and trusted him to do the right thing, even when he doubted that he could do it himself.

Thanks to Siryn's influence, Wilson has reformed slightly. Wanting to return the favor Siryn had done by trusting in him when no one else would, Wilson tried to help convicted killer Typhoid Mary work through her problems in the style of how Siryn helped him, but with a flair all his own.

While Wilson's intentions may have been noble, his choice of rehabilitee was horrible. Proving to be even more unpredictable than Wilson, Typhoid went on a killing spree in New York, and it took the combined efforts of Wilson and Daredevil to stop her. Worst of all, Typhoid got under Wilson's skin, and forced him to confront himself and the fact that he's just playing hero—deep down, he's as much a deranged killer as she. Trying to prove that he isn't like Typhoid, he savagely beat her, ultimately proving her right.

Wilson has had several adventures since his dealings with Typhoid, including battling Deathtrap and jaunting through the timestream, but the Typhoid incident has haunted Wilson, forcing him to question his motives and his reason for being.



UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

Kicking off in November, *Deadpool* #12-#13 make up "Drowning Man," an arc that shows Wilson getting about as low as anyone can go. "He screws up every aspect of his life in a very short period of time," says *Deadpool* scribe Joe Kelly. "He's still messed up from Typhoid playing with his head, so he messes up his relationship with Weasel, pisses off Siryn, and T-Ray is ready and waiting to bash his head to a bloody little pulp."

At the same time, Zoe Culloden from the mysterious agency Landau, Luckman and Lake decides it's time to make her move, and tries to get Wade to join LLL's side of the coming cosmic conflagration. Will things get better? Not before they get a whole lot worse. Issue #13 ends with Deadpool face-down in the snow. "Merry Christmas," Kelly says. "The holidays are always rough on single people."

Following Wilson's bottoming out, things will take a slightly different direction with issue #14, when Wilson learns that former Weapon X subjects are being killed left and right. This discovery will get him back together with his Weapon X buds, including Kane and Vanessa. "This different direction will fill in a lot of gaps in Wade's history," Kelly says. "Everything will lead up to next year's annual, which will focus on Wilson's origin, and just why he calls himself Deadpool anyway. It may not sound all that interesting, but it makes for a cool story."

RECOMMENDED HIGHLIGHTS

If you're itching for more action from the manic merc with a mile-a-minute mouth, be sure to check out these Deadpool choice cuts:

- ***X-Force* #15**—Deadpool and Cable *mano a mano*, or as Cable says, "*Mano a cabeza*—my fist on your face!" (Gotta love that dialogue.) All that plus the wrap-up to the whole Tolliver/Vanessa/Domino thingy and hints of Deadpool's past. Story by Fabian Nicieza and art by Greg Capullo.
- ***Deadpool: Sins of the Past* #1-#4** (also available in paperback)—"This is the one that really got me hooked on the character," Kelly says. "There's a germ of everything that makes up Deadpool in there—the one-liners, the violence, and doing the right thing even when you don't want to. It's all there." (That, and it's by Mark Waid and Ian Churchill.)
- ***Wolverine* #88**—Okay, you're Deadpool and your old flame's shackin' up with your old bud, Kane. What do you do? Find 'em and skewer them both, of course! Check this issue out for a heaping helping of jealous rage, with Wolverine to boot! By Larry Hama and Adam Kubert.

North Carolina-based writer Matthew Brady used to have a complexion like Deadpool's until he stopped picking at it. (Special thanks to Michael Dixon for research assistance.)

TOP 10 STILL DEAD HEROES & VILLAINS OF THE MONTH

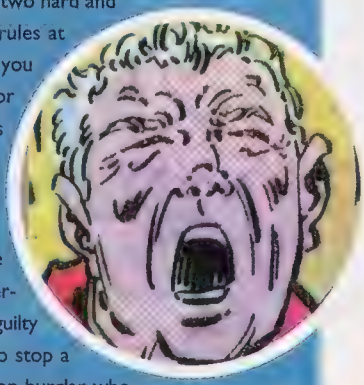
In honor of that spooky season Halloween, we interrupt your regularly scheduled "Here's the Top 10 Hottest Characters" list to bring you the "Top 10 Characters Who are Still Dead!"

1) BUCKY

Allllll right! Comic book axiom number one tells us that Bucky's the only guy who stays dead. And good soldier that he is, James Buchanan Barnes is holding that up! He's been sleepin' the dirt nap for 53 years now without one single legitimate resurrection! That's fine by us, as Bucky was quite the lame-ass anyway. He had no superpowers and only got to be Captain America's sidekick 'cause he accidentally stumbled on Cap's secret identity. But at least he died well. Bucky slabbed out during World War II, while trying to stop a Nazi plane loaded with bombs. He died for his country, *and* set the precedent for the disposable sidekick. Whatta trooper!

2) UNCLE BEN PARKER

We are told there are only two hard and fast, unbreakable editorial rules at Marvel Comics: One is that you never wake up Spider-Editor Ralph Macchio during his afternoon nap, and the second is that you can't bring back Uncle Ben. Y'see, Peter Parker only became the crime-fightin' Amazing Spider-Guy 'cause he was feelin' all guilty and stuff after he refused to stop a common burglar—a common burglar who later killed Petey's beloved Uncle Ben. Thus, Uncle Ben is the mechanism that created Spider-Man. Take that away, you take Spidey away. That's why Ben's been dead as a doornail for 35 years now.



3) JASON TODD (ROBIN)

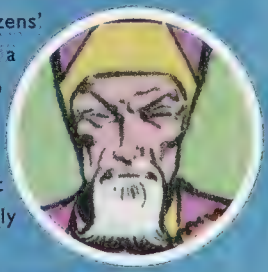
Ooooh, we like this one! Who killed Jason Todd? Was it the Joker? Nah. Jeffrey Dahmer? Nay. Botulism ice cream? Nope. It was the fans! Y'see, during the landmark 1988 "A Death in the Family" storyline that ran through *Batman* #426-#429, fans got to vote on whether or not they'd like to see Robin go to that big comic store in the sky. Through two special 900 numbers, fans could either vote for his survival or against it. Their decision: death! By a margin of under 100, no less! So fans deliberately chose to ace Batman's little buddy, adding yet another disposo-sidekick to the scrap heap! Good job, all!

4) BARON HEINREICH ZEMO

Give Heinreich credit. He may have died stupidly, burying himself under a rockslide that he himself started, but at least he's had the common courtesy to stay dead. He stopped breathing in *Avengers* #15 way back in 1965, and has stayed below ground ever since. Now his son, Baron Helmut Zemo, is a righteous pain in the ass! He's been dead about 43 kajillion times and keeps coming back! With at least three different names, yet! (From Phoenix to Baron Zemo to the current Citizen V!) Ya woulda thought Daddy taught Junior better. Oh, well. Hats off to you, Heinreich. You may have been Captain America's punching bag for years, but at least you did one thing right: die.

5) THE ANCIENT ONE

Boy, here's a guy just begging for morgue reservations. By the time he finally bit the big green burrito of death, The Ancient One was over 500 years old. Now, while he probably enjoyed senior citizens' discounts at movie theaters for a number of years, he also had to put up with a boatload of old man problems like hemorrhoids, hearing loss, lack of bladder control and liver spots. Trust us—it was a good thing he finally checked out.

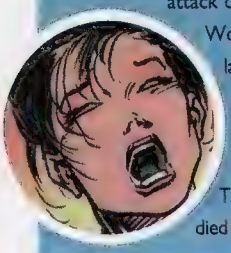


6) JERICHO

Hey, man—nice 'fro! Nice sideburns, too! This refugee from the 1971-72 American Basketball Association season is Jericho, and he had the distinct honor and pleasure of being killed by his own daddy. Y'see, his pappy, Deathstroke, ran the former Teen Titan through with a sword, claiming all the time that he had to do it 'cause baby boy was possessed by this evil demon guy Trigon. We think he did it 'cause his hair was an embarrassment to the family. Draw your own conclusion.

7) MARIKO YASHIDA

According to recent insurance industry estimates, in ascending order, the four most lethal occupations are: pro wrestler, stuntman, attack dog provoker and superhero love interest. Wolverine's old flame Mariko falls into the latter category. But oddly enough, she wasn't an innocent casualty of some weird, inter-stellar superhero battle. Instead, she died of blowfish toxin poisoning. Hey! Don't laugh! That's serious business! After all, Homer almost died from the same stuff on "The Simpsons." D'oh.

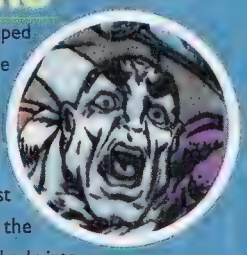


8) CAPTAIN MAR-VELL

Remember Jason Todd? Sure you do. What do he and Mar-Vell have in common? They both got waxed in stories written by the grandmaster of comic book death, Jim Starlin. When Starlin offed Cap'n M, he did it in deluxe fashion—Marvel's first-ever graphic novel, *The Death of Captain Marvel*. He also did it in mundane fashion by comic terms: Mar-Vell died of cancer. Hey, it might be more glorious to die in battle with a giant squid, but it made for a good story.

9) METAMORPHO

Poor ol' Rex Mason. His wife dumped him. His father-in-law hated him. The pizza boy brought him anchovies when he ordered pepperoni. He drove a Yugo. The worst part of all? He shoulda been the ass-whippinest guy in the DC Universe. He was the element man! He could change his body into any element he wanted (even lanthanum, atomic number 57, atomic weight 138.91), and do whatever he wanted! And he never took advantage. Death was a blessing for the poor lug.



10) BLINK

Hey! She usually makes our *regular* lists! Yeah, dead or alive, people sure do love that Blink chick. The funny thing? Death may have been a relief for Metamorpho, but it was a darned good career move for Blink. She got considerably more popular *after* she croaked! Before she became the big martyr chick, she was just one of a million X-Men characters. Now she's the one everyone wants to see, but won't be able to. Hey, baby—death becomes you.

MORT OF THE MONTH

Now it's time to look at the lamest character of the month, or, as we like to call 'em, the Mort of the Month!

WILD DOG (A guy who *oughta* be dead!)

Evil doers, beware! It's Wild Dog, a tough-talkin', street-walkin' vigilante guy armed with a bad T-shirt, goalie mask and a pair of "stun gloves" that knock people loopy! Ooooh, shocky gloves! We're scared!

Anyhoo, part-time crime-fighter/part-time auto mechanic Jack Wheeler saw his cliché mob-connected wife killed in cliché fashion by the cliché rival gangsters and swore cliché revenge. So he put on the worst wardrobe he could find and killed the bad guys. And they made a comic out of this cheap-ass Punisher knock-off? And he's *still* alive? Somebody put this guy in the Mort graveyard fast!

Sizzling New Animé From MANGA VIDEO

WINNER 1997 WORLD ANIMATION CELEBRATION AWARDS

"Best Theatrical Feature Film" & "Best Director of a Theatrical Feature Film"

BASED ON THE COMIC PUBLISHED BY DARK HORSE COMICS.
LOOK FOR THE GHOST IN THE SHELL GAME FOR SONY PLAYSTATION™ AVAILABLE IN OCTOBER.

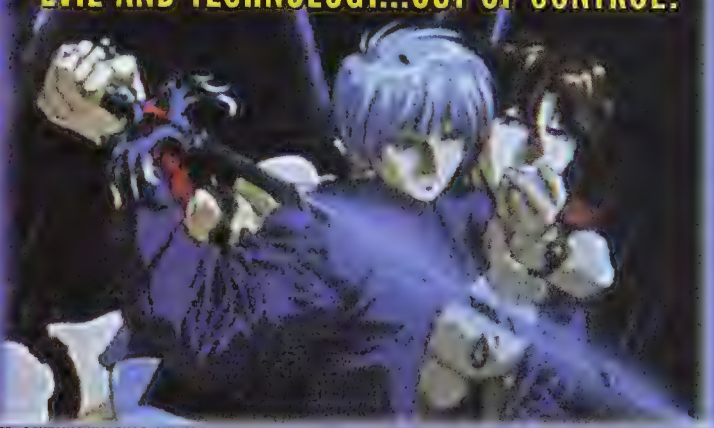
To celebrate the one year anniversary of the original video release and the excitement surrounding the newly released DVD, MANGA Video proudly presents the Ghost In The Shell "Special Edition." This "Special Edition" includes a digitally remastered version of the award winning feature film, as well as a 30 minute bonus program on the making of Ghost In The Shell. An in depth report detailing the movie's production, shows the creative process involved with the key production staff.

- Dubbed: $24.95
- Subtitled: $34.95

STREET DATE: 7/29/97

NOT RATED. CONTAINS VIOLENCE, EXPLICIT LANGUAGE AND NUDITY. PARENTAL DISCRETION ADVISED.

EVIL AND TECHNOLOGY...OUT OF CONTROL!



A satanic program is activated aboard a crowded commercial flight headed for Tokyo, releasing a swarm of invisible demons that send the aircraft plunging to a fiery doom. The owner of the devilish program - Akito Kobayashi - has plans for the human race. But when his evil plans expand beyond even his own grasp, it is his childhood friend, Kojiro Soma, who must find the strength within himself, to go head-to-head with the greatest demon of all!!!

- Dubbed: $19.95
- Subtitled: $24.95

STREET DATE: 8/26/97

NOT RATED. CONTAINS VIOLENCE, EXPLICIT LANGUAGE, NUDITY AND MATURE SITUATIONS. NOT FOR ANYONE UNDER 17 YEARS OF AGE.

VOLUME 6 - "THE UNVEILED RULER"

MANGA Video's hot new series "Street Fighter II V" adopts the darker, more intense tone of last year's smash animated feature movie. The series follows the journey of young martial artists Ken, Ryu and Chun Li, to seek out other "Street Fighters" in an effort to improve their fighting skills. Killer animation, explosive fight scenes, detailed drawings and adventurous story plots make the "Street Fighter II V" series a must have for MANGA fans everywhere!

- Dubbed: $19.95
- Subtitled: $24.95

STREET DATE: 8/26/97

NOT RATED. PARENTAL DISCRETION ADVISED.

www.manga.com

AVAILABLE AT: SUNCOAST MOTION PICTURE COMPANY AND FINE VIDEO & COMIC STORES EVERYWHERE

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MANGA SCENE

By Carl Gustav Horn

A GUIDE TO JAPANESE COMICS AND ANIMATION BOTH PAST AND PRESENT

SPIDER-MANGA!

The Japanese version of Spider-Man swings across the Pacific to America

The Japanese Spidey is not quite your favorite wall-crawler in *Spider-Man: The Manga.*

Is Yu Komori strong? Listen, bud, he's got radioactive blood. Can he swing from a thread? Take a look overhead.

Meet Komori, a high-school student in Tokyo, Japan. Yu frequently gets laughed at for being a bookworm and a science nut. One day, a fateful accident happens to him in a lab: A spider, mutated from exposure to radiation, bites him, transferring its energy to Yu's body. Dazed, he wanders around, only to find he now possesses strange spider-like powers...

If you think this story sounds familiar, you're not wrong. But it's not simply *Spider-Man*. It's *Spider-Man: The Manga*, a new series from the recently launched Marvel label Marvel Imports, due to hit the stands in late October.

Manga may be a hot topic these days, but, interestingly enough, *Spider-Man: The Manga*, written and drawn by Ryoichi Ikegami, known for manga titles *Sanctuary* and *Crying Freeman*, isn't a recent adaptation of an American title like the *Shi* spinoff *Manga Shi 2000*. Quite the opposite—*Spider-Man: The Manga* was done way back in 1970, making it true vintage Spidey.

Long ago, Marvel licensed the character to Japanese publisher Kodansha (which currently publishes *Gunsmith Cats*). Given a fairly free hand, Ikegami decided to better reach his audience by making Spider-Man Japanese, while using some of the already established American storylines and adapting the supporting characters.

Meet Yu Komori...the spectacular Spider-Man (of Japan).

Now, almost three decades later, the time is finally right to bring *Spider-Man: The Manga* to the United States, says its American editor, Tom Brevoort (*Untold Tales of Spider-Man, Thunderbolts*).

"Marvel has had the rights to do this for years," Brevoort says, "and it basically seemed

Villains like Electro won't be the same as their American counterparts in *Manga*

that the interest in Japanese comics in the United States has grown to the point where releasing the Spider-Man manga in English was a good idea.

"The original manga was reprinted in Japan in a five-volume set a few years ago, and a number of American comic shops have been special-ordering it for their stores because U.S. fans are curious. This seemed an excellent title to begin the Marvel Imports label."

Marvel, of course, played a vital role in the development of manga in the United States when it released Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira* through its currently inactive Epic label in 1988. Marvel has released no other manga since *Akira*'s completion in 1995.

But for Marvel's re-entry into manga, a title like Ikegami's *Spider-Man* obviously needs no introductions. Or does it?

Is releasing this Japanese variant on ol' Web-head a bit risky, considering all the uproar lately in regards to certain strange, clone-related plot twists in the American Spider-Man titles?

Brevoort doesn't expect a problem. "I think the possibility of confusion with the current American Spider-Man character is pretty much negligible.

"This is another flavor of Spider-Man entirely, yet his resemblance to the original is strong enough that American readers can definitely relate. It's like DC's Batman Elseworlds books, where Batman is a fish or something—everyone understands this isn't part of the regular continuity."

It's a good comparison. For just as it's Spidey's powers and Spidey's suit, but it's not Peter Parker under that mask, the rest of the manga story is retold from an decidedly different angle.

Brevoort says, "You'll see villains like Electro, Mysterio and The Lizard. They'll look the same and have the same powers, but they're not the same people as the American characters. Spider-Man's motivation for fighting crime is very different in the manga, too. Later on in the series, when Japanese science-fiction author Kazumasa Hirai starts writing stories, the surprises will get even stranger."

Spider-Man: The Manga will have a rather unusual publishing schedule. The first issue in late October will be 48 pages, but the title will become biweekly in November, with two 32-page issues coming out every month. All the issues will be published in their original black-and-white format.

Spider-Man: The Manga was originally released in Japan as part of a weekly magazine, and Marvel is attempting to approximate the book's original publishing pace.

"Although the pacing may seem a little strange at times, we're going to do the best we can to hit the Japanese story breaks on target in the American version," says Brevoort.

If *Spider-Man: The Manga* does well, Brevoort says Marvel Imports may consider bringing over the manga adaptation of the X-Men animated series, or even manga titles completely unrelated to American comics, as well as comics from other parts of the world.

For now, though, Marvel has well over a thousand pages of Spider-Man's Japanese story to tell—enough for a two-year run at the biweekly pace.

As they say in Japan, "*Abunai!* Here comes the Spider-Man!" W

Carl Horn once fought the Hottentots in the war against static cling.

ANIME PICK OF THE MONTH

Macross Plus: The Movie

(Manga Entertainment, subtitled VHS only, 115 mins., U.S. $29.95, now available)

"Macross Plus: The Movie" edits down the 2 1/2 hours of the previously released "Macross Plus" OAV series, but adds new scenes done especially for the film—including a new ending.

"Macross Plus" is a sequel to the famous "Macross" TV series of the early '80s (best known in America as part one of "Robotech"), but unlike most sequels, it actually represents an evolution, not a rehash.

Setting his tale 30 years after the original story, "Plus" screenwriter Keiko Nobumoto retains the classic "Macross" elements: a love triangle, hot-shot pilots flying ultra-tech spaceplanes and a pop singer everyone just adores. But in subtracting the external alien enemy of the original, "Plus" manages to liberate a much greater monster: the destructive power of human passion—given control over 21st-century technology that can twist minds as easily as it transforms mecha.

"Macross Plus" delivers clean, sharp animation, impressive computer graphics and a notably excellent soundtrack. But more than that, its grown-up characters and their violent lesson about the limitations of desire make it a story you'll remember.

Possessing both true spirit and true talent, "Macross Plus" is anime five cuts above the norm.

MANGA PICKS OF THE MONTH
Must-read manga books shipping in October

A, A' (A, A Prime)
Viz Comics

They've already cloned sheep. How long will it be before they clone humans? How would you feel if the girl you loved died—and you had her clone as a substitute? Could you start all over again with an exact copy, one that's perfect except for the fact that she has no memories of you or your life together?

That's just one of the intriguing SF stories to be found in this graphic novel collection of Moto Hagio's shôjo manga. Shôjo, a genre developed by women, emphasizes character development and innovative storytelling and layout. If you haven't checked shôjo out yet, you should—it was Masamune Shirow's biggest influence!

Mobile Police Patlabor #4
Viz Comics

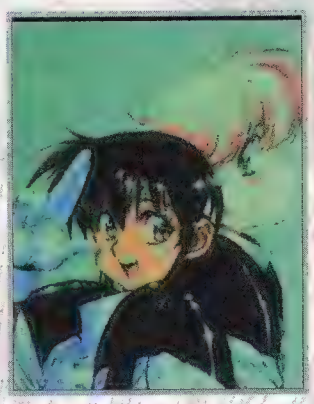
While a terrorist's going berserk in downtown Tokyo with a "Crab Man" mecha, the Tokyo P.D.'s Special Vehicles Unit One is heading to the scene in its three-year-old patrol labor junkers, converted from construction equipment. Meanwhile, Unit Two finds themselves the few, the proud, the sitting on their asses—still waiting for the ultimate in crimefighting technology, their brand-new Ingram mecha, to arrive from the factory. Sure, there's a lot of odd jobs to do around the station house, but... Check out the anime from U.S. Manga Corps and Manga Entertainment!

Oh My Goddess! Special: The Lunchbox of Love
Dark Horse Comics

The manga that inspired the six-part anime from AnimEigo! They say the route to a man's heart is through his stomach, but the way Hasegawa, "The Chef Assassin," cooks, she might as well be using a sword to get there!

Kind-hearted Belldandy wants to help teach Hasegawa how to impress a guy by making the legendary perfect lunchbox, but can anyone really unlearn an entire lifetime of horrid cuisine in one day, even with a divine tutor?

Plastic Little #3
CPM Manga



This issue shines a spotlight on the nurse of the ship *Cha Cha Maru*, Mei Lin Jones. As she fights to save Captain Tita from the grip of the rare letta fever, Mei's mind drifts back to how she came to serve aboard the ship and find her loyalty to Tita. This book includes a short "Plastic Little Intermission," where Tita gives her personal evaluations of her crew! These are all-new *Plastic Little* stories, written and drawn by the designer of the anime from A.D.V. Films, Satoshi Urushihara!

The Return of Lum—Urusei Yatsura: Creature Features
Viz Comics

Collecting *The Return of Lum Part Three* #7-#11, the *Creature Features* graphic novel continues the wild saga of the Galaxy's most wanted alien princess and Earth's most despised high-school student that made Rumiko Takahashi (*Inu-Yasha*) a superstar. Forget "Men in Black"—you'd need a stick three light-years long just to shake at all the interstellar weirdos in this volume! Trail a pretty extraterrestrial kindergarten teacher on a field trip to Earth, flee from public pool germs the size of Toyotas and crash an alien bachelor party! And don't miss the anime from AnimEigo!

The Two Faces of Tomorrow #3 (of 13)
Dark Horse Comics

Masamune Shirow says about Yukinobu Hoshino (*2001 Nights*), artist of *The Two Faces of Tomorrow*, "When I look at my own work, I always wish I could draw like Hoshino." Publisher Mike Richardson calls *Two Faces*' story of a 21st-century face-off of man vs. supercomputer—adapted from the hard-SF novel by James P. Hogan—"An intelligent and dramatic response to technology paranoia." In this issue: On a space station with a division of marines as back-up, Dr. Dyer begins a dry run on programming Spartacus, a "smarter" computer, to take over the out-of-control TITAN network. It should work—in theory!

By Joyce M. Steel

Witchblade's Halloween Party

Top Cow kicks off the month with a frightfully fantastic set just perfect for the Halloween season. *The Darkness/Witchblade: Family Ties* set is a 90-carder that expands on last year's Witchblade offering of original artwork from the creative teams on both books (Michael Turner and Marc Silvestri). Other Top Cow artists will give their rendition of these characters, and a guest artist subset even brings in outside talent like Greg and Tim Hildebrandt, Jae Lee and Joe Quesada. Chase cards include nine foil-etched puzzle cards (one per every four packs or 1:4), three thermographic cards (1:24) and one Marc Silvestri lenticular card featuring The Darkness (1:120) (eight cards per pack, suggested retail price $2.25).

JUDGING AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT

Another comic coming to cards for the first time this month courtesy of Comic Images is *Judgment Day*, the recent mini-series brought to you by Jeph Loeb, Rob Liefeld and Awesome Entertainment. This set promises to bring all the action of the series to card collectors.

Subsets include story cards, sketch cards and flashback cards. The set is chased by six "Awesome Chromium Cover" cards (1:16) and 500 authentic autographed cards from Loeb and Liefeld, randomly inserted (eight cards per pack, suggested retail $1.79).

CCG UPDATE

On the collectible card game (CCG) scene this month, WildStorm collects the most powerful cards from its *WildStorms, Conflict!* and *Image Universe* sets to compile its 200-card *Best of WildStorms* CCG (60 cards per starter deck, suggested retail $7.95 per deck).

STORMWATCHING

Speaking of WildStorm, if you've got a wad o' bills burnin' a hole in your pocket, run out and pick up one of the 500 *StormWatch Premium Signature Cards* out there this month. The featured artist is Tom Raney, and his authentic autograph appears on each card. A card costs a mere $49.95.

CARD TROOPERS

Inkworks winds down the month with a retro sci-fi-hit-turned-blockbuster. "Starship Troopers," the sci-fi classic that pits Earth against an army of enormous alien bugs, is going Hollywood this November in a $100-million effort from TriStar Pictures, and Disney and Inkworks are cramming all the action and effects into a 90-carder in October. Chasing the set are three levels of bonus cards: nine embossed "Bug Wars" cards (1:11), four foil-stamped puzzle cards that come together to form a fantastic unpublished image by artist Denny Beauvais (1:17) and two Starship Gold storyboard cards in complete foil embossing (1:54) (eight cards per pack, suggested retail $1.79).

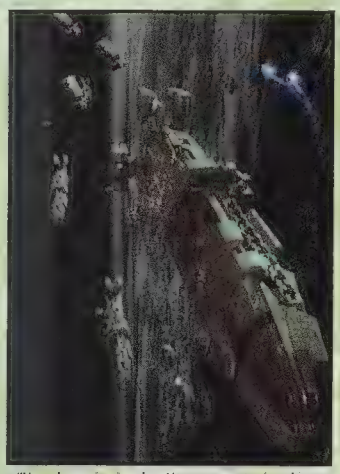
THE ORIGINAL TREK

Finally, Fleer/SkyBox jaunts back to the '60s with its next Star Trek set. *Star Trek: The Original Series, 1966-67* highlights the entire first season of this mother of all sci-fi TV shows. To enhance the collectibility of the set, Fleer/SkyBox has limited the production to 20,000 numbered cases and guaranteed one hand-signed Star Trek card in every display box. The signers are all former stars of the classic show, including William Shatner (Kirk), George Takei (Sulu), Nichelle Nichols (Uhura), James Doohan (Scotty) and even Ricardo Montalban (Khan). The 90-card series will dedicate three cards to each of the 29 episodes of the debut season, and have extensive text on the card backs. An additional set of 58 character cards will be inserted at a rate of one per pack. Chase cards include 58 behind-the-scenes commentary cards (1:3) and 29 foil embossed commemorative episode plaque cards (1:24) (nine cards per pack, suggested retail $1.99).

Joyce Steel es mas macho que Ricardo Montalban.

"Wow...we look like every other piece of Darkness art ever created."
The Darkness/Witchblade: Family Ties

"Look, up there...peas!"
Judgment Day



"Hey, those guys on that Mir space station need more vodka. Which one of you guys brought the Absolut?"
"Starship Troopers"

THANKS!

Thanks to all the fans, dealers, publishers and guests for making the WIZARD CHICAGO COMICON '97 such a spectacular success! We couldn't have done it without you. Thanks Again!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!
JULY 17, 18, 19

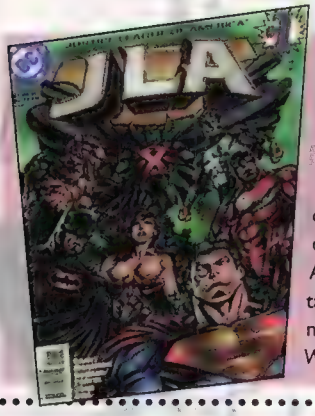
ROSEMONT CONVENTION CENTER

We've already started working on next year's show which will have more publishers, more stars, more events and more fun!

Look for guest announcements & information updates every month in WIZARD.

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are the back issues burning up the charts in September.**

TOP 10 COMICS



1. JLA #1

WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: Howard Porter and John Dell

Some things are constants in life. Death and taxes are two great examples. The fact that corn really doesn't digest all too well is another. *JLA* #1 on our "Top 10 Comics" list is quickly becoming another constant. It's easy to see why the comic is here. Your average fanboy rather likes the all-star lineup. And anyone with two brain cells to rub together realizes that Grant Morrison is one of the most quirky, talented writers around, and brings a sensibility to *JLA* rarely seen in a tights-'n'-capes comic. It's a nifty book, but one that bores us to tears to have to write about every month. Geez, what's next? *Witchblade* #1 again? **LAST MONTH: 1**

2. WITCHBLADE #1

WRITERS: David Wohl, Brian Haberlin and Christina Z.
ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

YEEEAAARRRGGGHHH! It's *Witchblade* #1 again! Brain...hurt! Can't...handle...incredible...lack of variety in...list!

But since we're here, we might as well tell ya a thing or two about *Witchblade* #1. Y'see, there's these bad-ass mobster dudes who are trying to latch onto this powerful-ass artifact known as the Witchblade-ass. Uh, make that just plain "Witchblade." But little do the gangsters know, the Witchblade is kinda reserved to be used by only one person per generation. Undercover cop Sara Pezzini infiltrates this li'l mob shindig and finds out (much to her surprise) that she gets to be the designated Witchblade chick. Lotsa blood ensues. **LAST MONTH: 3**

3. THE DARKNESS #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTISTS: Marc Silvestri and Batt

Instead of discussing *The Darkness* #1, we're going to tell you the meaning of life. It all starts with God, who is a kind and loving God, and... AARGH! It's Hellboy Jr. and he's...eating us! Can't stand...the pain! Blacking...out! **LAST MONTH: 4**

NUMBER THREE

NUMBER FOUR

4. JLA #2

WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: Howard Porter and John Dell

Whew! We survived the attack! Good thing our little hellborn buddy, Hellboy Jr., doesn't have a taste for *JLA*. But it's apparent that comic fans from coast to coast do like the *JLA* taste. It's mighty yummy. Tastes kinda like chicken, only a bit gamier. We recommend washing down your copy of *JLA* #2 with a copy of *JLA* #3, which ain't on this list, but does appear down at number 12. God help us if it ever makes the "Top 10" and we have to do another *JLA* write-up. **LAST MONTH: 5**

NUMBER FIVE

5. DARKCHYLDE #1

WRITER: Randy Queen
ARTISTS: Randy Queen, Jason Gorder and Marlo Alquiza

Darkchylde sure has a neat superpower-type thing. She channels nightmares and can become anything she wants from them. Sounds nasty and evil. So of all the monikers you could hang on this Darkchylde chick, why pick a light, happy name like "Ariel"? Does creator Randy Queen have a "Little Mermaid" fetish? Nah. He says, "I just think 'Ariel' is a sexy name and it fits well with 'Chylde.' I mean, if I called her 'Gertrude Chylde,' it just wouldn't work the same." Good point. **LAST MONTH: 2**

6. FANTASTIC FOUR #1

WRITERS: Jim Lee and Brandon Choi
ARTISTS: Jim Lee and Scott Williams

Nanny-nanny-nanny-nanny-poo-poo! All you doomsayers can go straight back to the filthy river that spawned you! Despite all the knocks thrown its way, "Heroes Reborn" worked. It generated interest in titles that no one gave a hoot about, gave people something different to chew on in their monthly reads, and now that the heroes are "returning," things are only gonna get better. It kick-started a humdrum book like *Fantastic Four*. And you're *still* buying copies of *FF* #1. At about eight bucks a pop. So there. **LAST MONTH: 6**

NUMBER SIX

NUMBER SEVEN

7. HITMAN #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTIST: John McCrea

For those of you just tuning in, *Hitman* is one darned fun book. It's featured things like Six-Pac (the perpetually drunk superhero), crazed-killer dead penguins (they were zombie-fied by some weird experimental formula) and the Cat-signal (a dead cat on a spotlight used to summon Catwoman). And the fun all starts here, in *Hitman* #1, in which Tommy Monaghan, our hero, drinks Sierra Madre beer, scopes out neighbor chicks with his X-ray vision and pukes on Batman's shoes. No kiddin'. You should check it out. **LAST MONTH: 15**

8. THE DARKNESS #0

WRITERS: David Wohl and Christina Z.
ARTISTS: Marc Silvestri, Michael Turner, D-Tron and Batt

It's a Darkness comic *and* a Witchblade comic all in one. Confused? You soon will be. Y'see, when our Top Cow buddies decided to launch *The Darkness*, they decided to do it in a number of ways outside of just doing a *Darkness* #1. One of those ways was a one-in-four variant cover on *Witchblade* #10 that they called *The Darkness* #0. So *Witchblade* collectors wanna get this book, as do *Darkness* collectors. That leads to mega-demand, baby. Dig it. **LAST MONTH: NOT RATED (N.R.)**

NUMBER EIGHT

NUMBER NINE

9. THE MEN IN BLACK #1

WRITER: Lowell Cunningham
ARTIST: Sandy Carruthers

For seven years, this cheeseball Aircel comic called *The Men in Black* has been haunting the quarter bins of comic shop America. Then they make a really cool movie based on the characters called "Men in Black" that goes over better than free potatoes at Irish Fest, and suddenly every collector worth his backing boards has just *got* to get a copy of *The Men in Black*. Suddenly it's going for, like, 80 bucks. AND IT'S STILL A CHEESEBALL COMIC! Is this a screwed-up country or what? **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

10. ALPHA FLIGHT #1

WRITER: Steven T. Seagle
ARTISTS: Scott Clark and Chris Carlson

Trust us: Stereotypes suck. Alpha Flight's problem in the past? They've been the Canadian superteam that's just there to be Canadian! That gets boring fast. So writer Steve Seagle changed the focus. The big thing in the current *Alpha Flight*? Authority, and how it affects people. Alpha Flight gets pushed around by Department H, the government body that sanctions them. Some members take the pushing. Some push back. And it doesn't matter if this happens in Canada, the U.S. or Paraguay. It's pretty darned interesting stuff, and a good read. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

NUMBER TEN

THE NEXT TEN

THE NEXT 10 HOT BOOKS AND THE COMPANIES THAT MAKE THEM

11. ASTRO CITY (VOL. 2) #1 HOMAGE
12. JLA #3 DC
13. DARKCHYLDE #2 MAXIMUM
14. THE DARKNESS #2 IMAGE
15. JLA #4 DC
16. RESURRECTION MAN #1 DC
17. THUNDERBOLTS #1 MARVEL
18. WITCHBLADE #2 IMAGE
19. NIGHTWING (REG. SERIES) #1 DC
20. UNKNOWN SOLDIER #1 DC

MARKET WATCH

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH · by Lars Pearson

'SPAWN' #1: NO $ HIKE

It's nearly impossible to wander into your local comic store or watch TV without seeing that Spawnmania is rampant these days. The "Spawn" movie and HBO cartoon series have gotten endless hype. A buttload of TV documentaries have been shot about the series and its creator, Todd McFarlane. Spawn toys are flying off the shelves.

But get this: All of the hype, fanfare and high sales of Spawn comics and toys and stuff does not guarantee an increase in price for *Spawn* #1. In fact, it's quite possible the book could *drop* in price.

It is a traumatizing concept to some collectors—that one of today's top comic book sellers could be taking a price hit—but at the heart of the matter are our old friends "supply" and "demand." See, in early 1992, comic book sales were "Yee-haw!" across the board. So in May 1992, *Spawn* #1 sold 1.7 million copies—roughly the population of San Diego. But since then, all comics have gone down in sales. *Spawn* today doesn't even sell 200,000 a month.

Do the math: Demand may be big, but there's a seemingly endless supply of *Spawn* #1s to meet it. And while there aren't 1.7 million each of 'em, there's also a huge supply of *Spawn* #2-#17. Anything from *Spawn* #18 on is a safer bet, since around the time #18 came out, the comic market was cooling, and the almost-unprecedented release of *Spawn* #19-#20 *after* #25 weakened retailer confidence and orders. So if you don't see any big price increases in your collection, do the best you can and try to stay calm. It's only comics.

***Spawn* #1 is no sure bet in back-issue bins, while Nightwing (below) is making a killing there.**

NIGHTWING SOARS

He's black. He's blue. But he's not taking a beating at the cash register.

Man, fans are crazy for *Nightwing*! In some stores, new-issue sales of *Nightwing* beat Batman titles, and as is typical for a comic that's popular on the new market, *Nightwing*'s also being snatched out of the back-issue bins.

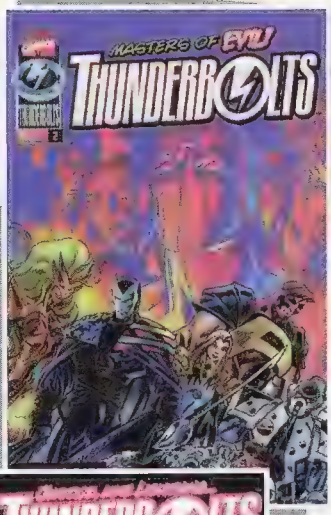
Nightwing doesn't have the continuity baggage of *Batman*, nor does Dick Grayson have a huge supporting cast, meaning new readers can easily hop on. Rapid-fire back-issue sales prove the creative combination of writer Chuck Dixon and artist Scott McDaniel works. Dixon always makes Grayson the star, even when Batman or his old Teen Titans teammates crop up, and McDaniel's turning out the moodiest art of all the Bat-spinoffs.

And by the way—strong writer/artist teams who stay a while tend to give a series more long-term lift than a popular fly-by-night team. So assuming Dixon and McDaniel stay for any length of time, the long-awaited *Nightwing* could grow to new heights for a Batman spinoff.

MARVEL'S #2s: WHAT VARIANTS?

Another question plaguing the collective collecting geeks of America: Which *Thunderbolts* #2 is the rare and more-to-drool-for variant? The Mad Thinker cover or the one where the team members "reveal" their identities? Answer's simple: Neither of 'em.

Almost any comic takes a sales dive with the #2 issue, right? Well, to overcome that,



Marvel's second-issue "variants" aren't as rare as you'd think.

Marvel's marketing department began the "Two for Two" program, offering two covers for the #2s of new monthly series, including *Thunderbolts*, *Heroes for Hire*, *Maverick* and *Alpha Flight*.

But get this: Retailers could order the two covers in any quantity they wanted. And Marvel's sales department has confirmed that sales on all the "Two for Twos" came in at a 50/50 split, or so close to that as to not matter. To get a price split, you have to have a pretty wide gap in distribution. There might be a tiny, tiny split between the different Marvel #2s, but not so much that anyone really pays much attention to it.

By the way, Marvel is going to offer a *true* distribution-split variant for the "Heroes Return" #1 issues—including *Captain America* #1 and *Avengers* #1—as a retailer incentive program. For each issue, there's likely to be a cover that's only a fraction of the print run, so rare-book collectors will have something rare to satisfy them. W

Wizard Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson's name can be rearranged to say "Slap No Rears." We don't wanna talk about it.

Wizard's Top 10 Artists*

Paul Schiraldi

1 **Mark Waid**
Ka-Zar, Painkiller Jane

2 **Garth Ennis**
Preacher, Hitman

Paul Schiraldi

3 **Peter David**
Hulk, Aquaman

Paul Schiraldi

4 **Kurt Busiek**
Astro City; upcoming: Avengers

J. Schuyler

5 **Scott Lobdell**
Uncanny X-Men; upcoming: FF

Bobo Martin

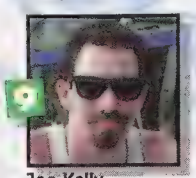
6 **Grant Morrison**
JLA, The Invisibles

Paul Schiraldi

7 **Frank Miller**
Sin City

Al Ortega

8 **David Wohl**
Witchblade



9 **Joe Kelly**
Deadpool; upcoming: X-Men

10 **Steven T. Seagle**
Alpha Flight; upcoming: Uncanny X-Men

Wizard's Top 10 Artists*

Paul Schiraldi

1 **Jim Lee**
Divine Right

Paul Schiraldi

2 **Joe Madureira**
Uncanny X-Men

3 **Michael Turner**
Witchblade

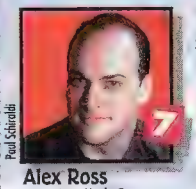
Jim McHugh

4 **Marc Silvestri**
The Darkness

Paul Schiraldi

5 **Adam Kubert**
Incredible Hulk

6 **J. Scott Campbell**
upcoming: *Danger Girl*


Paul Schiraldi

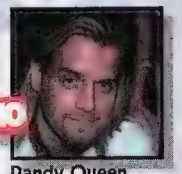
7 **Alex Ross**
upcoming: *Uncle Sam*

Al Ortega

8 **Carlos Pacheco**
X-Men

C. Blankenhorn

9 **Andy Kubert**
Ka-Zar



10 **Randy Queen**
Darkchylde

***Pencilers and painters**
***Wizard*'s Top Ten Professionals lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey.**

BURIED TREASURE

Punisher Kills The Marvel Universe

Piles of bodies! That's what writer Garth Ennis delivers in a typical issue of DC/Vertigo's *Preacher*, and that's what Marvel's superheroes become in the space of these 46 pages.

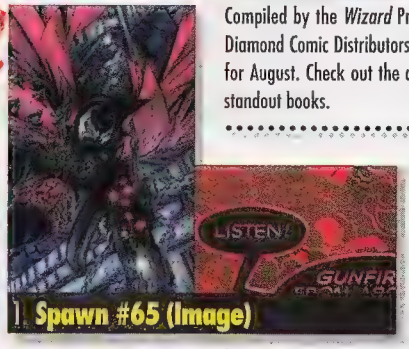
Written by Ennis, this *What If?*-style story revises Marvel continuity to show that *superheroes* killed Frank Castle's family instead of the mob. In retribution, Castle, as the Punisher, systematically offs all of Marvel's heavyweights, including Spider-Man, Wolverine and the Hulk.

Now that Ennis' legion of readers is realizing that this issue exists, people are looking high and low for it. Problem is, it's rare as hell. When this comic was released in 1995, Punisher's popularity had almost croaked and the issue's $5.95 price tag meant that few were printed. Ennis has not done much Marvel work anyway, making this baby even more of a rarity. So if you wanna see him roach Marvel characters *just* once…this is the only place to go. ■ *LP*

WIZARD™ TOP 100

The highest-ordered comic books for the month of AUGUST.

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors, the following is a listing of the highest-ordered comics for August. Check out the column on the right for an explanation of this month's standout books.



1. Spawn #65 (Image)
2. Uncanny X-Men #348 (Marvel)
3. X-Men #68 (Marvel)
4. Fantastic Four #12 (Marvel)
5. Wolverine #117 (Marvel)
6. Iron Man #12 (Marvel)
7. Avengers #12 (Marvel)
8. Captain America #12 (Marvel)
9. Uncanny X-Men '97 (Marvel)
10. JLA #11 (DC)
11. Generation X #31 (Marvel)
12. Curse of the Spawn #12 (Image)
13. WildC.A.T.s/X-Men: The Modern Age #1 (Image)
14. X-Man #31 (Marvel)
15. Witchblade #17 (Image)
16. Cable #47 (Marvel)
17. X-Force #70 (Marvel)
18. Genesis #1 (DC)
19. Gen13 #22 (Image)
20. X-Factor #138 (Marvel)
21. Genesis #2 (DC)
22. Genesis #3 (DC)
23. Genesis #4 (DC)
24. Incredible Hulk #457 (Marvel)
25. Amazing Spider-Man #427 (Marvel)
26. Generation X '97 (Marvel)
27. Spectacular Spider-Man #250 (Marvel)
28. Gambit #2 (Marvel)
29. Excalibur #113 (Marvel)
30. Superman #128 (DC)
31. Adventures of Superman #551 (DC)
32. Superman: The Man of Steel #72 (DC)
33. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #84 (Marvel)
34. Alpha Flight #3 (Marvel)
35. Batman/Spider-Man (DC)
36. Action Comics #738 (DC)
37. Colossus #1 (Marvel)
38. KISS: The Psycho Circus (Image)
39. Psylocke & Archangel: Crimson Dawn #3 (Marvel)
40. Batman #547 (DC)
41. Sensational Spider-Man #20 (Marvel)
42. Deadpool #9 (Marvel)
43. The Coven #1 (Awesome)
44. Maverick #2 (Marvel)
45. Detective Comics #714 (DC)
46. Batman: The Long Halloween #11 (DC)
47. Gen13 Bootleg #10 (Image)
48. Green Lantern #91 (DC)
49. Supergirl #14 (DC)
50. Thunderbolts #7 (Marvel)
51. Gen13/Generation X 3-D Edition (Image)
52. Catwoman #50 Collector's Edition (DC)
53. Preacher #30 (DC)
54. Action Comics Annual #9 (DC)
55. The X-Files #33 (Topps)
56. Marvel Team-Up #2 (Marvel)
57. Star Wars: Dark Force Rising #4 (D.H.)
58. Nightwing #13 (DC)
59. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #99 (DC)
60. Lady Death: The Crucible #6 (Chaos!)
61. S. Wars: Boba Fett—Murder Most Foul (D.H.)
62. Ka-Zar #6 (Marvel)
63. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #67 (DC)
64. Robin #46 (DC)
65. WildC.A.T.s #41 (Image)
66. Wonder Woman #126 (DC)
67. Shi: The Series #1 (Crusade)
68. Elseworlds' Finest #1 (DC)
69. Untold Tales of Spider-Man #25 (Marvel)
70. Heroes for Hire #4 (Marvel)
71. S. Wars: T. of the Jedi: F. of the Sith Empire #3 (D.H.)
72. The Superman/Madman Hullabaloo! #3 (D.H.)
73. Supergirl Annual #2 (DC)
74. Elektra #11 (Marvel)
75. Batman Chronicles #10 (DC)
76. Green Lantern Annual #6 (DC)
77. Arcanum #5 (Image)
78. Silver Surfer #132 (Marvel)
79. What If? #101 (Marvel)
80. Batman: Shadow of the Bat Annual #5 (DC)
81. Starman #35 (DC)
82. S. Wars: X-Wing R.S.—In T. Empire's Service #1 (D.H.)
83. Batman Secret Files #1 (DC)
84. X-Files Season One: Deep Throat (Topps)
85. The Kents #3 (DC)
86. Aquaman #37 (DC)
87. Azrael #34 (DC)
88. Xena: Warrior Princess #1 Photo Cover (Topps)
89. Fighting American #2 (Awesome)
90. Teen Titans #13 (DC)
91. Mage: The Hero Defined #2 (Image)
92. Daredevil #368 (Marvel)
93. Cyberforce #35 (Image)
94. Weapon Zero #14 (Image)
95. Impulse #30 (DC)
96. Venom: Sign of the Boss #2 (Marvel)
97. Journey into Mystery #513 (Marvel)
98. Inferno #1 (DC)
99. The Maxx #32 (Image)
100. Daydreamers #3 (Marvel)

TASTY OFFER MAKES SPAWN THE KING

• ***Spawn* #65 (No. 1):** Uff-da! How'd Spawny-guy beat the X-Men this month? Was it the new-movie hype? The HBO series? Venus aligning with Mars and the dawning of the Age of Aquarius? Maybe a little, but it had more to do with a little retail incentive offer.

For every 25 copies of *Spawn* #65 ordered, retailers got a black-and-white version of *Spawn* #1 with a spankin' new Todd McFarlane cover. For every 100 copies ordered, they got a B&W *Spawn* #1 signed by this "McFarlane" fellow. The thought is that these premiums can be sold for a king's ransom, so retailers ratcheted up *Spawn* #65 orders to get 'em.

• ***Genesis* #1-#4 (Nos. 18, 21-23):** Power on! A big showing for DC's annual crossover makes *Genesis* DC Comics' highest ranker this month outside of the juggernaut that is *JLA*. The loose crossover structure of the weekly *Genesis* means other DC books' sales numbers weren't helped by it, but having these four books up this high sure didn't hurt DC.

• ***The Coven* (No. 43):** Who's The Coven? What *is* a Coven? God only knows! That's why this debut is so amazing! Created and drawn by fan-fave Ian Churchill (*Cable*), this is a great start fora completely unknown property.

• ***Elseworlds' Finest* #1 (No. 68):** A pretty strong showing for a DC "Elseworlds" book. With Batman and Superman taking center stage, *Elseworlds' Finest* could have sold more copies—but thanks to the $4.95 price tag, DC's still swimming in dough.

• ***Heroes for Hire* #4 (No. 70):** After the usual issue #2 sales drop, *Heroes for Hire* has bounced back nicely, posting solid sales increases for each of the last two months. Readers seem to rather dig both the "B-list" characters (Power Man, Iron Fist, Hercules, etc.) and the creative team of writer John Ostrander and penciler Pascual Ferry.

• ***Inferno* #1 (No. 98):** What's going on here? This is a rare case where a spinoff actually trumps its parent series. In this instance, Legion hanger-on Inferno came in ahead of *Legion of Super-Heroes* and *Legionnaires*. Guess retailers expect readers to dig that fiery, cute Inferno chick and the words and pencils of *Action Comics'* Stuart Immonen.

ATTENTION COMIC BOOK RETAILERS:

If you're a retailer who would like to participate in our compiling of the *Wizard* Top 100 (and be a candidate for special incentives), please write to us at the address below.

Top 100 Coordinator
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064
or e-mail us at: **WizardTGTC@aol.com**

BULL PEN

C.B.I.Q.

Games, puzzles and stuff that'll tickle your tummy with the taste of nuts and honey

comic book intelligence quotient

Former Mort of the Month Ultra the Multi-Alien welcomes you to the Miscellaneous *Wizard* Fun Section!

Halloween's just about here, and there's nothing scarier than this month's "CBIQ." It's time for you to rank all those useless hours of reading comics against the more frightening items found in the Green Goblin's purse. The higher you score, the more you'll wonder: Which is scarier, a Green Goblin or a guy carrying a purse?

Score	Rank
0-4	A handkerchief covered with nose-goblins.
5-14	That weird-looking "massager."
15-19	A photo of a clean-shaven Eddie Munster.
20	A squeegee.

1. Which DC character was murdered in a swamp, and later, after merging with rotted swamp material, became an eerie superpowered humanoid?
A) Floronic Man
B) Solomon Grundy
C) Poison Ivy
D) Black Orchid

2. Which subversive ninja group just dug up the rotted, desiccated corpse of Spider-Man's foe Dr. Octopus?
A) The Dark Blade
B) The Shi-Mar
C) The Hand
D) The Colon

3. Remember those scary DC storytellers, Cain and Abel? Well, of which house was Cain the caretaker?
A) House of Horrors
B) House of Mystery
C) House of Secrets
D) House of Buggin'

4. Who was the disturbing creature that stole the pyrokinetic powers of Hellboy's buddy, Liz Sherman?
A) the Mugwump
B) the Homunculus
C) the Somnambulist
D) the Gluteus Maximus

5. Spawn's spooky throne is made out of...
A) a living mass of worms.
B) part of his sentient cape.
C) a mangled, rusted trash bin.
D) human corpses, natch!

6. She-Hulk once fought a scary team of dead mutant corpses. What was their team called?
A) The X-Zombies
B) The Unliving Exhumed
C) The Ex-Mutants
D) The Brotherhood of Evil Dead Mutants

7. Remember that crappy superteam known as Team Titans? Well, what was the name of the vampire of that ghastly group?
A) Nightstalker
B) Nightrider
C) Nightprowler
D) Nightknight

8. What happened when Purgatori, after two years of searching, finally found her nemesis, Dracula?
A) Purgatori became one of his brides.
B) Dracula defeated Purgatori and tore off her wings to remind her that he was her superior.
C) She killed him by draining him of his blood, thus leaving him too weak to find shelter when the sun rose.
D) They decided to team up to fight Evil Ernie, who was killing his way through Eastern Europe.

9. Which other gigantic freak monster did Fin Fang Foom team up with to defeat the alien invasion force of the Gargoyles of Stonus V? (Yes, this is an actual plotline.)
A) Ymir, the Frost Giant
B) It, the Living Colossus
C) Godzilla (in his Marvel series)
D) Ultimo, the Really Big Creature Guy

10. What team of superheroes did the first demonic Ghost Rider (Johnny Blaze) once belong to?
A) X-Men
B) Champions
C) Fallen Angels
D) Casper's Friendly Ghost Squad

11. Which supernatural spirit only appears one night a year and perpetually crushes the dreams of a small boy?
A) The Spectre
B) The Great Pumpkin
C) Etrigan
D) Digger

12. When that blood-sucking bimbo Vampirella died, where did she find out Hell was?
A) on her home planet of Drakulon
B) in a limbo-like dimension only accessible through a portal in Castle Dracula
C) in the suburban room of a child who also happened to be Satan
D) in the back room of a bar called The Gay '90s

13. What is the purpose of that smelly swamp guy, Man-Thing?
A) to be the guardian of the Nexus of All Realities
B) to be this dimension's avatar of Lord Chaos
C) He was appointed by Gaia (Mother Earth) to be nature's protector.
D) to provide nesting material for various confused swamp birds

14. How did J. Jonah Jameson's son, John, become the hairy-palmed Man-Wolf?
A) He was bitten by a werewolf while on a mission for the CIA in Eastern Europe.
B) He was cursed by an evil communist Eastern European gypsy while traveling through Hungary.
C) A stone he found while on the moon grafted itself to his body, causing him to turn into the Man-Wolf on the night of a full moon.
D) While John was attending a science demonstration, a radioactive wolf bit him, thus giving him the proportionate strength of a wolf.

15. Which demonic character was responsible for bringing the Flash's Rogues Gallery back to life?
A) Ares
B) Lord Satanus
C) Mephisto
D) Neron

16. When Apocalypse brought the Angel back from his untimely "death" and turned him into a blue-skinned, razor-feathered freak, which name did the Angel then go by as a Horseman of Apocalypse?
A) War
B) Archangel
C) Death
D) Flatulence

17. In *Curse of the Spawn*, what does the demented serial killer, Mawbley, take from his dead victims?
A) their severed left hands
B) their livers
C) their hair (And we mean all of it!)
D) their eyes

18. Witchblade's body-frying foe, the Microwave Murderer, was recently revealed to be:
A) Ian Nottingham.
B) Bruce Wilder.
C) Ms. Boucher.
D) Marv Albert.

19. What was the creature created by Dr. Victor Frankenstein known as in the DC Universe?
A) Spawn of Frankenstein
B) Adam
C) Patchwork Man
D) Marilyn Manson

20. How did Spider-Man contribute to Morbius' being cured of his "living vampire" powers?
A) He helped the half-insane Morbius create an antidote by using blood taken from the Lizard.
B) Spidey knocked Morbius into a vat of experimental bat "venom" extract, which counteracted the vampire bat hormonal chemicals already in his body, causing him to revert to normal.
C) While drinking Spidey's radioactive blood, Morbius was struck by lightning, thus curing him of his horrible condition.
D) Spidey took away all of his Anne Rice books and informed him that his Goth-look was "a little fruity."

WIZARD CROSSWORD

you know, across, down, that sort of stuff

TOO TOUGH?
Stop being a crybaby.
The answers are on page 206.

ACROSS

1. Jim Corrigan
5. Master of the Mystic Arts
12. Guy Gardner's dead girl
13. was possessed by Malice; initials
14. ruler of Hel
16. Un-Men creator
18. WetWorks werewolf
19. "A Death ___ the Family"
21. voice of Gargoyle; init.
22. Goblyn's team; ____ Flight
24. I...Vampire
25. Jack Russell, _____ by Night
27. Betty Brant's late husband; init.
28. Thena's Deviant boyfriend
29. Western "bad girl" with 1940s comic; init.
30. Ghost Rider demon
32. directing third "Crow" film
33. Image comic *Immortal* ___
34. Raven's demonic dad
38. went from *Zot!* to Superman; init.
40. led the Global Guardians
42. drew Valeria the She-Bat; init.
44. The Creeper
46. the Kyoto Sohei are from here
47. reporter Elisa Cameron
49. Songbird's former alias; Screaming ____
50. drew *The Kindly Ones*; init.
51. Moonboy's big red buddy; init.
52. created many Marvel monsters; init.
53. Super Friends' jungle girl
56. Sunfire's home
58. Jason Blood
59. Simpsons war site; ____ Springfield
60. led the Infinity Watch
62. band on "Spawn" soundtrack
64. SuperTeens member Pureheart; init.
65. Zatanna's murdered lover
68. Lady Death and Evil Ernie love to ____
69. Marvel zombie master
71. *Stray Bullets* creator; init.
72. the brain that fought Marvel's Dracula

DOWN

1. fear bomb-using Bat-foe
2. ___ Degaton
3. "____ Nights of the Beast"
4. Baron Hans Von Hammer; init.
5. Vlad the Impaler
6. Dufus P. Ratchet; Big ___
7. Keaton played Batman _____
8. Force Commander; Prince _____
9. Abnegazar's demonic partner
10. Fatal Five chick; init.
11. Vampirella's "dead lover walking"
15. drew Halloween Jack
17. Amalgam's Dark ____
20. Joker wears this around his neck
23. *WetWorks'* werewolf assassin
26. rat-creatures can be found here
27. murdered Gwen Stacy; init.
30. magician Alley-Kat-Abra's team; ____ Crew
31. *Savage Dragon* policewoman
33. "Tiny ____ Adventures"
35. simian Flash and Supergirl villain
36. Astro City's Confessor is one
37. Scarlet Witch's last name
39. Blackheart's pappy
41. Marvel's Nighthawk; init.
43. Eternals' High Priest
45. Captain America's Nazi foe
48. Wanda Fitzgerald's ex-husband from Hell
49. Kirk Langstrom
50. The Living Vampire
54. the Comet and Jaguar's imprint
55. Spider-Man 2099; init.
56. Thundra's mate
57. 27 down's alias; Green _____
61. Lord Plunder's feline friend
63. Wolverine's foe Dirt Nap is this
66. brings *Pitt* to life; init.
67. Sergio Aragonés' magazine
70. "They saved his brain!"; init.

BULL PEN

Party or Die!

The first annual Wizard company picnic was held Thursday, July 31 at Krucker's Restaurant and Grove in Pomona, N.Y., and it was...odd. As staffers spent the day mixing, mingling and stuffing their faces, hijinks and tomfoolery were in abundance. Simple water-pistol fights escalated to buckets-of-ice-water fights, volleyball games stretched to five-hour volleyball-a-thons, and we all sat around and tried to figure out the appeal of bocce ball. "It was a great time," said *Wizard*'s always-sporty Senior Staff Writer Jim McLauchlin. "The food was good, the softball was competitive, I got to blast a *piñata* into submission and snap *Wizard* Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson's ass with a rolled-up towel, and we got to see someone get beer poured in his ear." Fun for the whole family.

Above: Jim, blind as a bat. Right: The Three Amigos (from left), Dan DiGiacomo, Arlene So and Scott Klein.

One of the Damned

Steve Blackwell

design manager, *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*

What do you do at Wizard Press?
I'm basically in charge of everything that gets designed for Wizard Press, including all the magazines, advertising stuff, posters, #1/2 offers—anything and everything. I'm also a master of obscure facts about anything, and one member of the Triumvirate of Terror, but our powers and mission are top-secret.

Your favorite section in *Wizard*?
I like to read "Magic Words," to listen to the delirious ramblings of our Midwestern madman Jim McLauchlin.

What surprised you the most about the Wizard offices?
The amazing amount of methane that can be found in the atmosphere.

What has been your favorite design job?
I liked working on the Wolverine cover for *Wizard* #73. I got Hawkeye, Yellowjacket, Firelord and Jack of Hearts on a *Wizard* cover.

How do you stay fit and healthy? And what about the hair?
I try to watch what I eat and try to get regular exercise—and take Flintstones Chewables! As far as my hair goes, it has a mind of its own.

Who would play you in a movie?
Ray Liotta, or I've been told Lee Majors from "The Six Million Dollar Man."

Favorite TV shows?
"Babylon 5" and "MST3K."

Favorite musicians and albums?
Van Halen—all of 'em. Alice of Chains—all of 'em. Soundgarden—all of 'em!

Being a Marvel historian, what has Marvel done right and wrong recently, and what should it be doing?
Spider-Clone: wrong. Norman Osborn being alive: *wrong*. Garney and Waid back on *Cap*: right. Pérez on *Avengers*: *right*. They just need Walt Simonson on *Thor*, and Michelinie, Layton and John Romita Jr. back on *Iron Man*, and they'd be in the right direction.

Favorite comics right now?
Nightwing—it just has great crime stories, and when Dick Grayson is handled correctly, he's an excellent character to read—*Legion*, *JLA* and *Astro City*. I'm always a fan of *Hellboy*, when it comes out.

Favorite comic book stories of all time?
The Count Nefaria story in *Avengers* #164-#166—the story showed the dynamic of the team correctly; how tough they are—and the "Hellfire Saga" in *Uncanny X-Men* #129-#134, in which you got to see Wolverine cut loose for the first time, gutting and killing people.

What superpower would you want, and why?
Franklin Richards has a pretty good power—the ability to reshape reality in his own image—because my main goal *is* world conquest.

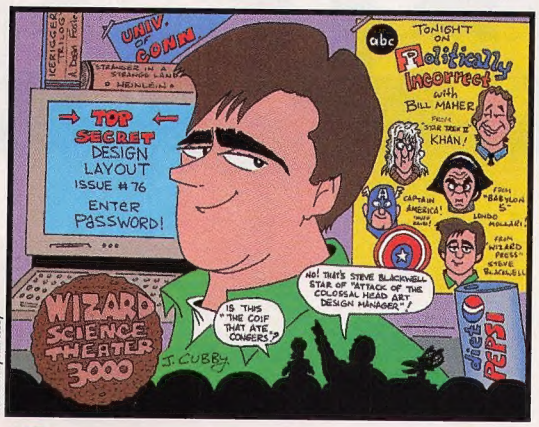


Illustration by Jim Cubby

WIZARD TOP TEN

Top 10 scariest things to find in your bag after trick-or-treating in a superhero universe

10. A jar full of something that came out of Modok.
9. Scabs that fall off Baron Zemo's head every time he takes off that damn Citizen V mask.
8. Any DC Comics annual from the last eight years.
7. One of those gross tequila lollipops with a chewy Mr. Mind center.
6. Puck from Alpha Flight.
5. A fanboy with an overnight bag.
4. Jim Shooter's résumé.
3. Reach in your bag—SNAP!—*Wizard* Copy Editor Marc Wilkofsky's handcuffed to you!
2. An entire set of Marvel Flashback comics.
1. Uncle Ben.

CONTEST WINNERS

BONE, *Wizard* #70: Derrick Holloman of Maury, N.C., created this female Bone!

CAPTAIN AMERICA, *Wizard* #70: Kevin Connolly, San Antonio, Texas
JACKIE CHAN, #70: Wally Connelly, East Granby, Ct.

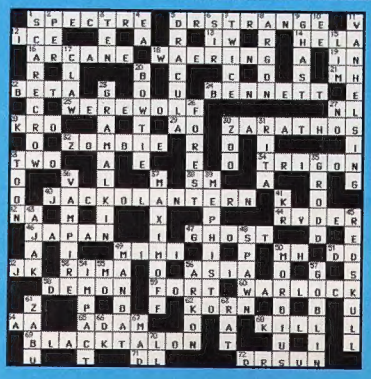
C.B.I.Q. answers...

from page 204

1. B	5. D	9. B	13. A	17. D
2. C	6. B	10. B	14. C	18. C
3. B	7. B	11. B	15. D	19. A
4. B	8. A	12. A	16. C	20. C

CROSSWORD answers...

from page 205



WIZARD
#76
DARKNESS
COVER BY
MARC SILVESTRI
CAPTAIN AMERICA
COVER BY GEORGE PÉREZ
FREE
UNCANNY X-MEN POSTER
BY CHRIS BACHALO!
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AVENGERS CHROMIUM
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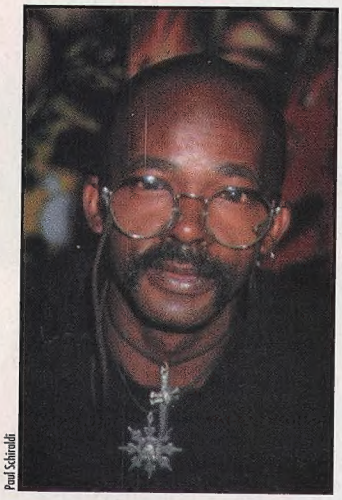
WIZARD profile

Here's looking at...

STEVEN HUGHES

Those who think Steven Hughes is about horror and nothing else are dead wrong. "I very much enjoy the dark thing because I'm a big horror fan," says the 46-year-old artist for Chaos! Comics' *Lady Death*, "but I can diversify very quickly."

And he has. Science fiction, superheroes, sword and sorcery, cowboys—Hughes traveled a varied road to get to his current status. It started back in '87—while working as Director of Food Services and Housekeeping for a Massachusetts-based public health agency, Hughes found himself with too much time on his hands. So, with ballpoint pen in hand, he drew an 11-page fight sequence and sent it off to the big guns of the industry. Although one response instructed him to seek work outside of the comic book industry, he took the rejection in stride—and within days was offered a two-page back-up story in Aircel's sci-fi comic *Stark Future*. Within a few days of submitting that work, Aircel asked him to take over the title, which he did for issues #10-#17.



Paul Schiraldi

What followed was a short list of jobs for smaller companies: the first two issues of Tammy Comics' *Partners in Peril* and *Power Stars*, and a handful of issues for Blue Comet Press' *Rough Raiders* and *Bladesmen*. At Blue Comet, he hooked up with Brian Pulido, and the two went on to put Evil Ernie on the map.

"We hit it off right away," explains Hughes of his first meeting with his current partner. Pulido had traveled from New Jersey to Hughes' home in Boston to discuss working together. In a phone-intensive industry, Pulido's in-person approach made a serious impression on Hughes. "He had the same passion, the same drive."

That drive led to the inevitable launch of Chaos! Comics. "We both felt we would be better off if we sunk our teeth into the publishing world ourselves." If Evil Ernie and Lady Death's staying power is any indicator, they made the right choice. Hughes went on to pencil the original *Evil Ernie* mini-series, *Evil Ernie: Revenge!*, *Evil Ernie: The Resurrection* and numerous *Lady Death* mini-series. And even with the upcoming *Lady Death #0: Death Becomes Her* and *Lady Death: Her Wicked Ways*, Hughes says there's life beyond Death. "I have characters I'd like to bring back to the party," he reveals, naming *Detonator*, a title he and Pulido published two issues of back in 1994.

And, apparently, there's also life beyond comics. Hughes shares his Arizona home with a menagerie of animals, his wife and his three children. It's with his kids that the artist sees his greatest work in progress. "They're my legend, my contribution to the world. Trying to raise them right—that's what I'm about."

By Scott A. Aubrey

First comic read...
Wally Wood's *Dynamo*, from Charlton

Favorite comic book story of all time...
Watchmen. It changed my view of comics by featuring heroes who weren't really heroes.

Favorite work of your own...
I haven't come to it yet.

Favorite comic character...
My favorite, with the exception of Lady Death, would be Grimjack. He was a gritty character who dealt with the gray issues.

The one person you'd like to meet...
Mohammed. I would ask him so many questions.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m...
Anything in the refrigerator. I'm not choosy.

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...
As a kid, a Radio Flyer; it was a remote-controlled B-52 airplane. As an adult, my big-screen TV.

Things you collect...
Action figures, films and swords

Favorite pastime or hobby...
Just chilling. I'm about comfort.

Favorite television shows...
"Seinfeld," and "Martin"—before he went a little ego-crazy. I'm heavily into comedy. The world's too full of misery.

Costume worn the last time you went trick-or-treating...
At the Chaos! Halloween Bash, I was a faceless, red-hooded goblin.

Last good movie you saw...
"Men in Black." It was a good movie. I was entertained.

Favorite cartoon...
"Gargoyles." There is a continued storyline and depth in it.

Nickname you have or had...
I had a nickname when I was younger: Ice. I got it because I could walk across patches of ice without falling.

Person you would most like to work with...
[Vampirella artist] Louis Small Jr. He's a very talented person, and I think he's highly underrated.

If you had the power of the Beyonder...
I'd do the right thing. Maybe we'd all be better off. W